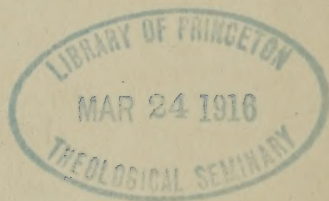


THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF DOCTRINE  
IN THE EARLY CHURCH

JOHN S. BANKS, D.D.



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The development of doctrine  
in the early church

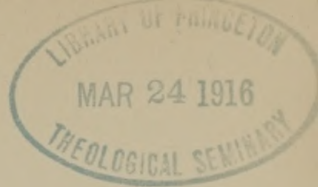












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THE EARLY CHURCH

BY  
✓  
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AUTHOR OF "MANUAL OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE"  
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## INTRODUCTION

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OUR subject is the development of doctrine, or the history of dogma, from the apostolic age to the days of Augustine. The term DOGMA, which has played so great a part in the Christian Church, is taken from Greek philosophy, where it stood for the distinctive doctrines of particular teachers and schools. It carries with it the idea of authority, as appears in its use in Scripture passages like Luke 2<sup>1</sup>, Acts 16<sup>4</sup>, 17<sup>7</sup>, Eph. 2<sup>15</sup>, Col. 2<sup>14</sup>. A Christian dogma is a doctrine regarded as binding on all Christians, or on all the members or ministers of a particular church. There are two elements to be considered in dogma, the substance or contents and the form. The first is drawn from Scripture. Every Church professes to derive its beliefs directly or indirectly from this source. The form is generally determined by some controversy or error that has arisen, as is evident

from the fact that in the absence of controversy even important doctrines are left undefined. Logic, philosophy, current modes of thought greatly influence the forms of definition, many think influence them unduly. Still, in the case of accepted doctrine, it is only the form, not the substance, that is modified by philosophy.<sup>1</sup> To this extent the intellectual element is very prominent in the work of doctrinal development. While the necessity of repelling and guarding against error has generally been the occasion of technical statements and so of all set creeds and formularies, it is not the only occasion. Much is due to the innate impulse of reason. Man seeks to know, to understand as far as possible the truths he believes. While he is saved by faith, he is also a seeker after knowledge, a lover of wisdom. In any case the philosophic instinct would have led to definitions and systems of doctrine. Christianity has never been opposed to reason and philosophy in themselves.

Not only the rise of error, but the influence of great minds has largely determined the course of development. In the period under consideration the history of thought is mostly the history of a few lives and schools of teaching—Origen, Clement, Tertullian, Irenæus, Cyprian, Athan-

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 32.

asius, Augustine ; Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, and Rome. The story might be written in the form of a few biographies. The materials of the story are found not merely in the definitions and decrees of councils, in confessions and creeds, but also in the writings of eminent leaders of thought.

The Roman Catholic Church, in keeping with its view of the Church as the divine interpreter of God's will on earth, regards the decisions of General Councils (in later ages these were under its own direction) as obligatory. The Greek Church takes the same attitude in regard to the early Councils. All other Churches hold themselves free on the question, although they differ in the amount of deference shown to early Church authority. The Anglican Church, which pays the greatest regard to that authority, says in its Articles that General Councils "have erred." It may be said that the evangelical Free Churches hold by the substance of the three Creeds, although they may criticise the terms. The Reformation made no change in this respect. Its controversies turned on doctrines of another class. It tacitly accepted the system of doctrine defined in the three Creeds. The same is true of evangelical churches generally.

In the period ending with the death of Augustine all the great doctrines of Christianity

received preliminary definition. The decisions arrived at then form the basis or starting-point of subsequent discussions. A few points need notice here. One is the division of labour between the eastern and the western church. The former occupied itself chiefly with doctrines relating to the nature of the Godhead. We owe to it the formulating of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. These definitions were taken over bodily by the western church. The latter under Augustine's lead busied itself with the doctrines of sin and redemption and their effects. The eastern church never appropriated these doctrines as taught in the west. It should also be noted that Augustine's specific doctrines were never endorsed by councils, as the teachings of Athanasius were. They served partly as a stimulus and guide to later thought and partly as a quarry from which the later church borrowed material with more or less acknowledgment. Another strange fact that will come out in the following pages is the stagnation of thought into which the Greek Church fell after its early period of activity. Its history virtually ended with the sixth or seventh century. No other church has lived so long and so completely on the traditions of a remote past.

The period under consideration forms a whole



by itself. We there see the completion of a great movement in the Church's life. There is a common spirit and character distinguishing it from subsequent periods. The Ante-Nicene age is often treated as a separate period, and there are good reasons for the course. But it has the disadvantage of separating the seed-time from the harvest. The discussions and controversies of the Ante-Nicene period found their settlement in the next two centuries. The two periods are stages in one historical development. Of course any sharp division in history is impossible. One age runs into another. Still, if the periods taken into view are long enough, they are seen to have different characters. The Early Church, the Mediæval Church, the Modern Church differ widely from each other.

Some writers of our day would bring the apostolic age itself into the process of development,—a levelling down which implies a new departure of a serious kind. Whether it is possible to level down or not, history shows that it is quite impossible to level the post-apostolic up to the apostolic age. The second century has been the subject of special investigation in our days. New discoveries have added to the materials at our command. The result so far is to bring into clear relief the great gulf fixed

between the apostolic and post-apostolic church. The writers of the second century show no sign of equality with the writers of the New Testament. They appeal to the latter as their authority.

Histories of Dogma abound in Germany. In English we have Shedd's, Crippen's, Fisher's histories of Christian Doctrine, with translations of Neander's *History of Dogmas* and Hagenbach's *History of Doctrine*. The object of the present work is to trace the progress of doctrine, as far as moderate limits allow, in close adherence to the original writers. Dr. Seeberg's *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* supplies ample quotations for the purpose. Accordingly that work, along with Dr. Loofs' *Leitfaden* and Zeller's Compendium in Zöckler's voluminous *Handbuch*, is taken as a guide. Professor Harnack's great work, now translated, needs only to be mentioned.<sup>1</sup> It may be said that Seeberg's work is an antidote to much that is questionable in Loofs and Harnack. If the present brief exposition should help in the study of larger works on the subject, its purpose will be answered.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Crooks' *Story of the Christian Church* is an excellent compendium of Church History (Wesleyan Conference Office). The same is true of Fisher's *History of the Church* (Hodder & Stoughton). Another able treatise is *Origin and Development of the Nicene Theology*, H. M. Scott, D.D., Chicago, 1896.

## PART I

### I

#### THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

*Clement of Rome, Epistle to Corinthians, circa 97 A.D.*

*Second Epistle, spurious, perhaps 140 A.D.*

*Hermas (identity uncertain), "Shepherd," in 5 Visions, 12*

*Commandments, 10 Parables, 97 to 100 A.D.*

*Ignatius of Antioch, Seven Epistles (Ephesians, Magnesians,*

*Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnæans, Poly-*

*carp), c. 110. Written on his way to martyrdom in Rome.*

*Polycarp, Epistle to Philippians, same date.*

*Barnabas (identity uncertain), Epistle, c. 96-98, Alexandria.*

[OUR knowledge of the life of Ignatius is exceedingly meagre, and is gathered from his letters. Other traditions are not worth repeating. He was converted from heathenism late in life, and became the second or third bishop of Antioch, succeeding Evodius. He was condemned to death by wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre, and was sent to Rome in charge of soldiers. By the way he stopped at Smyrna, where he met

deputies from the churches of Tralles, Magnesia, and Ephesus, and wrote letters to these churches and to Polycarp. From Troas he wrote letters to Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Rome. Dr. Lightfoot, comparing the letters of Clement and Ignatius, speaks justly of the "intensity of moderation" in the former and the "intensity of passion" in the latter. His seven letters have come down to us in a longer and a shorter form; the latter is now generally accepted. Other recensions of thirteen and three letters have been advocated. The reason of the keen controversy which the letters have excited is found in their references to bishops and their position in the church. The date of his death is about 110 A.D.]

These writers derive their name from the fact that they come next to the apostles in time; they are interesting to us on this account. The contrast in their writings to those of the apostles is striking. The doctrinal teaching is incidental in form.

1. Clement's name does not occur in the epistle, which is written in the name of the Roman church in order to allay dissensions in the church at Corinth. The following points of doctrinal teaching may be noticed. There is one

God, Lord of the world, and in this sense Father. "Have we not one God, one Christ, one Spirit of grace who is poured out upon us? Is there not one calling in Christ?" In nature Christ is the Son of God, exalted above the angels, the sceptre of God's majesty. He was sent by God to redeem us, and in him we are chosen to be God's people and possession. His descent from Abraham as to the flesh is contrasted with another origin. His sufferings are God's sufferings. He is our helper in weakness, our high-priest in the offering of gifts. Through his mediation we are enabled to see God and taste immortal knowledge. In love Christ gave his blood for us, his flesh for our flesh, his soul for our soul. "By the blood of the Lord redemption comes to all who believe and trust in God." This blood, shed for our salvation, is so precious to the Father that it "brought the grace of repentance to the whole world." "In the Old Testament all were justified, not through themselves or their works or righteousness which they had done, but through his will. We also, called by his will in Christ Jesus, are not justified through ourselves or through our wisdom or understanding or piety or works that we have done in purity of heart, but through faith, by which the Almighty has justified all from the



beginning." Still, it is added that this does not exclude good works. Faith also is defined as confidence, trust. A humble spirit, believing trust in God, obedience to God, unreserved devotion to him obtain salvation. A less Pauline note is struck when we are required to keep God's commandments, "in order that our sins may be forgiven in love." Christians are spoken of as God's people, called saints, Christ's flock. They are distinguished for mutual fellowship, hospitality, submission to their leaders and to one another, for their sobriety and order. Clement earnestly advocates the resurrection of the body.

It was worth while to give this extended reference, in order to illustrate Clement's evangelical spirit,—a feature which soon becomes too rare. The balance between faith and practice is well maintained.

2. Hermas's elaborate metaphors made his work popular in his day, but they involve his meaning in great obscurity.<sup>1</sup> Several modern writers (Harnack, Loofs, Baur) have understood him to make Christ a mere man, in whom God pre-eminently dwelt. But there are passages which

<sup>1</sup> Hermas was in early times identified with the Hermas of Rom. 16<sup>4</sup>, but there is no certainty on the matter. The title "Shepherd" is taken from the angel who figures in the work under the guise of a shepherd.

tell against this. Christ, the Son of God, is the door by which men enter God's kingdom; the ancient rock, on which the tower of the church is built. "The Son of God is older than all his creation, so that he became the Father's counsellor in his work of creation." Angels stand at his service, and he might have guarded his people by their means; but he cleansed them from sin by his own work. In some passages Hermas seems to confuse Christ with the Holy Spirit. He speaks of Christ as "the pre-existent Holy Spirit, that made all creation"; and elsewhere says "the Son of God is that Spirit." Here we must also remember the unsettled terminology of those early days. The meaning, probably, is that Christ was a pre-existent spiritual being. "Such language was not uncommon in the second century." Christ is called the Spirit of God also by Irenæus, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian.<sup>1</sup>

Evangelical and unevangelical thoughts seem strangely mingled in Hermas. Sin consists not merely in outward acts, but in evil desire; faith is the unreserved surrender of the heart to God; repentance is inward, a turning of the heart from sin to God. God's Spirit and the powers of the Son of God dwell in man. On the other hand,

<sup>1</sup> Seeberg, p. 22. Scott, *Nicene Theology*, p. 151.

life is given and sin is pardoned in baptism. Only one repentance is possible,—that in baptism. By exceptional grace a second one is preached by Hermas, but nothing beyond. The church is said to be built, not only on Christ, but on the waters of baptism. Here we have an intimation of a legal teaching, which soon becomes more common. It is not that the idea of keeping God's law is made too emphatic, but that its place and relation to the motive-power of faith are misstated. The true connection between the two is lost. There is one passage of Hermas which has the honour of being quoted as "Scripture" by Irenæus, Origen, and Athanasius. It runs, "Believe then first of all, that there is one God, who created and ordered all things, and from nothing made all things to be, and contains all things, himself uncontained."

3. Ignatius overflows with warm, evangelical teaching. Christ is "God, our God, my God." At the end of the days he became man, as the revelation of the one God, the Father, and so is God and man at once. He is the "one physician fleshly and spiritual, begotten and unbegotten, God made flesh, true life in death, both from Mary and God, first suffering, and then unsuffering, Jesus Christ our Lord," and much more in the same strain. The reality of Christ's earthly

life and suffering is dwelt on, no mere seeming. Still the title "Son of God" in Ignatius does not describe Christ as begotten eternally, but as one springing both from David's race and the Holy Ghost (Seeberg). Thus he is both Son of man and Son of God. There is no explanation of the nature of Christ's death, but it is spoken of as the source of life to us. "Believing in his death, we escape death." Christ's indwelling in Christians is a leading thought in Ignatius. Christ is our true life; he dwells in the hearts of believers, like the Father. Hence Ignatius calls Christians God-bearers, temple-bearers, Christ-bearers, Spirit-bearers. In him we are, live, and act. Apart from him we have no true life. The connection of faith and love is excellently pictured. "Faith is the beginning, love the end." "All fair things are present together, if you believe with love."<sup>1</sup>

As is well known, the Church and the episcopate are prominent in Ignatius. The term "Catholic Church" first occurs in him. "Where the bishop appears, let the multitude be, just as

<sup>1</sup> One expression of Ignatius, "My love has been crucified," has been taken by some to refer to Christ (so Seeberg). Wesley makes it the refrain of a fine Passion-hymn, "My Lord, my love is crucified." Others (like Th. Zahn, Loofs) take it as meaning his love for life and worldly things.

where Christ Jesus is the Catholic Church is." There is no intimation of an outward unity. The Catholic Church is the entire Church in contrast with the individual Church. The bishop or episcopate is only spoken of in relation to the latter, not to the former as was done much later in Cyprian's days. As the entire Church has its centre in Christ, so the individual Church has its centre in the bishop. What the apostles are to the Church, the presbytery is to the individual Church. The bishop is the type of God or Christ, the presbyters are types of the apostles. Apart from the three offices, there is no church. Subjection to the bishop of the particular church is the condition of the unity, on which Ignatius insists so much. "Be subject to the bishop and to each other." Baptizing and celebrating the eucharist in the Agape are reserved to the bishop. The eucharist is called "the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ that suffered for our sins, which the Father in his goodness raised again." The bread is the "medicine of immortality." Ignatius is appealed to as a witness to an early episcopate. But, apart from all questions of interpolation, his episcopacy differs considerably from the later forms.

4. The brief letter of Polycarp breathes a similar spirit to Ignatius. Christ's deity, his



suffering for our sin, his exaltation, our salvation not by works but by Christ, are mentioned. He is especially emphatic on the necessity of walking in the Lord's commandments. Faith, love, and hope are the substance of the Christian life and righteousness. But "the earnest of our righteousness" is Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the tree. All who keep his commandments God will raise up and make to share in Christ's dominion. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John, and he reproduces St. John's thoughts.

5. The Epistle of Barnabas, like the Shepherd of Hermas, is a singular mixture of truth and error. Christ's pre-existence, his work as Creator and Judge, his dying on the cross for the forgiveness and renewal of men, the grace of baptism, the divine indwelling in the heart, are taught. On the other hand, good works are put in the foreground, the Old Testament system is condemned as not from God, allegorical interpretation is used, a strong millenarian element is present. The allegorical strain points to Alexandria, but not the millenarianism.<sup>1</sup>

6. The legal strain is accentuated still more in the so-called second epistle of Clement, which

<sup>1</sup> The writer was once identified with the Barnabas of the Acts, but internal evidence is all against it. It is incredible that St. Paul's companion should have held such views.

is really a homily or sermon of a later date, and the first specimen of the kind. We are to think of Christ as God, as Lord of the living and the dead. "Christ the Lord saved us; being at first spirit, he became flesh, and so called us."<sup>1</sup> Both Christ and the Holy Spirit seem to be regarded as creatures of the Father. Christ is chiefly, if not entirely, a teacher, although he is said to have suffered for us. The chief thought is, "What return are we to make to God, what fruit worthy of his gifts?" We are to confess Christ, and keep his laws. Whoever transgresses them suffers eternal punishment. Immortality and eternal life are the reward of obedience. Repentance is change of conduct rather than change of mind. Faith is believing God's promise of reward. The resurrection of the body is strongly asserted. The kingdom of God begins with the Second Advent.

The recently discovered "Teaching of the Twelve" contributes nothing new to our subject. It is entirely practical, not doctrinal. The first part, under the figure of the Two Ways of Life and Death, instructs catechumens respecting Christian duties—love to God and our neighbours, sins to be avoided, conduct to teachers, to the church, the needy, children, and kindred,

<sup>1</sup> Scott, *Nicene Theology*, p. 157.

confession of sin in the church before prayer and before the eucharist. The second part is addressed to the baptized, and treats of worship and church offices. Only bishops (= presbyters) and deacons are spoken of, along with prophets, apostles, teachers. Official action evidently does not preclude the exercise of their gifts on the part of church members. The writing has been attributed to Alexandria and the first decade of the second century, and its primitive simplicity agrees with this date.

It will be observed that in the Apostolic Fathers the churches of Rome, Alexandria, Asia Minor, and Syria are represented, and the unity is striking. The writings remaining to us<sup>1</sup> are too brief and occasional to allow us from them to judge in detail of the belief of the post-apostolic church. Nor in the case of the doctrines referred to is there any attempt to explain. New Testament teaching respecting God, Christ, the atonement, forgiveness, etc., is simply reproduced; but in the main the reproduction is faithful. Here and there we notice already a tendency to the external and legal, which is destined afterwards to attain rank growth. Dr. Seeberg also calls attention to the absence of the

<sup>1</sup> Papias' *Exposition of the Lord's Sayings*, in five books, has perished.

Jewish spirit. The legalism observable is due rather to Gentile than Jewish influence. "The misinterpretations of the Gospel are traceable to the fact that the Gentile Christians did not understand the Old Testament bases of apostolic teaching."

RULES OF FAITH.—At this early date the New Testament canon was not sharply defined. There was no necessity as yet to do this. The Old Testament and New Testament books had no serious rivals. The need for defining the New Testament canon arose later in opposition to Montanist and Gnostic error. At the earlier date we even find the writings of Hermas, Barnabas, the Teaching of the Twelve, 1 and 2 Clement, the Revelation of Peter, and Preaching of Peter occasionally cited as Scripture, and they were also read in public service. Whatever the explanation may be, the practice soon came to an end. The rule is, that in writers of this period the Old Testament is quoted as divine as in the New Testament, and New Testament books are treated in the same way.

The roots of THE APOSTLES' CREED go back to this period. It comes to us from no Council, and was a spontaneous growth. Its undogmatic character is in keeping with the earliest days. The creed is found in South Gaul, in substanti-

ally its present form, at the end of the fifth century. This form differs but slightly from the one in use at Rome, which can be traced back to the middle of the third century. As we know from Ignatius and Justin that similar forms were used in the east in their days, and Irenæus and Tertullian derive the Rule of Faith from apostolic days, it seems probable that these forms were early brought to Rome from the east. The Roman form, as used by Marcellus of Ancyra (337 A.D.), runs thus: "I believe in God the Father Almighty; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, crucified and buried under Pontius Pilate, rose again from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost, the holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh." This is plainly an extension of the baptismal formula, and was called "the rule (canon) of the truth" and "the rule of faith," *regula fidei*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scott, *Nicene Theology*, p. 324.

## II

### EARLY CONTROVERSIES AND ERRORS

WE are now to see how in practice the rise of controversy and error necessitated the definition of doctrine and determined the form of the definition. The errors were partly of Jewish and partly of heathen origin. The former had little influence ; the latter were far the most important. We shall at least see that the second century was a time of immense mental activity. Our information respecting these errors is drawn chiefly from the Christian writers who refuted them,—Justin, Irenæus, Origen, Hippolytus, Epiphanius, Eusebius, Jerome.

1. Errors of Jewish origin : NAZARENES, EBIONITES, ELKESAITES. All these have left little or no mark, and our knowledge of them is scanty and uncertain. It is said that the NAZARENES held Christ's miraculous conception, believed in him as the Son of God, and, while continuing to observe the Mosaic law, did not

wish to impose it on others. The EBIONITES (*Ebion* = poor, either the founder's name, or designating the poverty of the sect) made Christ a mere man, endowed at baptism with the Spirit of God, and rewarded for his work as prophet with the title of Son of God. Evidently they were more Jewish than Christian. Jerome says of the Nazarenes that "while professing to be both Jews and Christians, they were neither." Dr. Seeberg says that the Nazarenes were Jewish *Christians*, the Ebionites *Jewish Christians*. The former acknowledged Paul and used only a Hebrew gospel; the latter rejected Paul and used only Matthew's gospel. But it is not easy to reconcile the different statements given about these parties.

The creed of the ELKESAITES was a mixture of theosophic speculation and asceticism, such as the Colossian epistle suggests. Angels played a great part in the teaching. The miraculous birth of Christ was denied. Paul was rejected.

The only trace left by these sects and by Jewish influence generally is in certain works known as the Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions*, which appeared at the close of the second century. Clement of Rome and the apostle Peter figure in these fantastic romances. The teaching seems to be a compound of Gnostic and



Jewish ideas ; but no Gnostic or Jew would have recognised it. Christ is at most a prophet who, like Adam and Moses, taught that there is one God, who made and will judge the world. Circumcision and sacrifice are rejected. Ablutions and vegetable diet are commanded. The history of these writings is wrapped in great obscurity.

2. GNOSTICISM is of heathen origin. It describes a great movement of thought which was felt everywhere throughout the second century. Its beginnings are discernible in the Colossian and Pastoral epistles (1 Tim. 6<sup>20</sup>), and in John's first epistle, and it culminates about the middle of the century. Basilides of Alexandria (*c.* 130 A.D.), Valentinus of Rome (*c.* 150 A.D.), Ptolemæus, Bardesanes of Edessa, Heracleon are among the chief leaders, the first two giving their names to the two chief sects. The name "Gnostic" aptly defines the aim. The Gnostic, not content with faith, professes to *know* the solution of all problems—God and the world, good and evil, spirit and matter. Tertullian makes the Gnostic ask, "Whence evil ? Whence God ?" God in himself dwells at an infinite distance from the world. At the opposite pole is matter, which is eternally and essentially evil. The distance between the two is bridged by a great number of powers

or beings called Æons (*αἰῶνες*), emanations from God. One of these Æons, called the Demiurgus, comes into contact with the remote world of matter and shapes it into the present world. The good in the world comes into it from contact with the higher world in the Æons. Christ is the Æon who comes to redeem the world from evil by setting free the good elements in it, and apparently undoing the work of the Demiurgus. He redeems by teaching and example. It is this use of Christ's name which gives the system all the Christian character it has. The difference between the sects is made by the different arrangement and disposition of the intermediary Æons. It should be noted that God and the Demiurgus are different beings, the former never coming into contact with man. The antagonism of spirit and matter is a chief Gnostic principle. The whole theory in all its forms is ultra-spiritualistic. Matter is intrinsically bad, spirit intrinsically pure. Spirit is to be restored to purity by separation from matter. The only way to holiness for men is to get rid of the body. Therefore Christ's body could not have been real; it was only a phantasm. Here we have the **Docetism** which infected so much of the thought of the century, and influenced some of the Christian Fathers (see 1 John 4<sup>3</sup>). A heavenly

Æon Christ united himself for a time with the man Jesus, but left him before the suffering. Men are classified according to this rule as pneumatical, psychical, somatic, — spiritual, animal, material. The spiritual man sees the supreme God revealed in Christ and cleaves to him. The psychical man is the ordinary Christian who may be saved by faith and works, the material man is utterly ignorant and unreceptive, and is doomed to be lost.

The Gnostics formed churches and societies of their own alongside or within the Christian church, with mystic doctrines and rites, hymns, and prayers. Anointing the dying was one of their rites. They tried by allegorical interpretations to use Scripture in support of their claims. In addition they professed to have a secret tradition that had come down from the apostles. This is the first instance we find of an appeal to the authority of tradition.

It is needless to argue how utterly opposed such views of God and the world and man are to the doctrines of Scripture. Heathen, Jewish, and philosophical elements far outweighed any Christian element. We may perhaps wonder that such dreams could ever be treated seriously. But it is a question whether some of the speculative systems of the modern world are more

intelligible or probable. At least the old Gnostic theories are not less wonderful as displays of sheer intellectual strength than some greatly admired theories of our own days. In one case, as in the other, philosophy is substituted for religion. Gnosticism can only be understood when viewed in this light.

Hitherto Gnosticism has been regarded as outside of and opposed to Christianity, and with good reason. Some modern writers seem wishful to include it in the course of Christian development. Professor Harnack speaks of Gnostics as "Christians who tried by a rapid movement to conquer Greek culture for Christianity and Christianity for Greek culture," and of Gnosticism as the "acute secularising or Hellenising of Christianity," *i.e.* as doing at a stroke what Christian theology did by a slow process. Thus, the Gnostic leaders were the first Christian theologians. But if Basilides and Valentinus were Christians in belief, who could ever be called heretics? What were Tertullian and Irenæus, Clement and Origen? Which of the distinctive Gnostic ideas—the inaccessible God, the evil of matter, docetism, emanations—passed into the faith of the Church? The charge brought by some writers against Christian theology of turning religious truth into philo-

sophy is true to the fullest extent of the old Gnostics. They were speculative philosophers more than theologians; Christian theologians they were not.

Yet the indirect influence of Gnosticism on Christianity was great. It stimulated reflection on the great questions of life, and so led the way to reasoned, systematic statement of the answers of revelation to these questions. In this sense it compelled Christian thinkers to become theologians. We see this effect plainly in Alexandria. Clement and Origen are fond of representing the Christian as the true Gnostic; and so not merely Christian theology but Christian philosophy was born. The progress from faith to knowledge is surely right, wherever it is possible. Provided that the limitations of man's faculties are remembered, the desire for knowledge, for vision, the desire to look upon the unveiled face of truth, is one of the strongest instincts and brightest glories of human nature. No philosopher would say, "We have but faith, we cannot know." If so, how does the word "knowledge" come to exist?

Another important effect of Gnosticism was in leading the Church to the clear consciousness of Scripture as the rule of faith. When Gnostics claimed to interpret the New Testament in their

own favour, and to possess a secret apostolic tradition in the same sense, Christians were forced to ask how Scripture had always been understood, and what the true tradition was. This is the meaning of the appeal made by Irenæus and Tertullian to Scripture and to the churches founded by apostles. These churches were the best witnesses to the way in which Scripture had always been interpreted by Christians. There is no evidence of any tradition outside Scripture. In this way the Church realised what books had always been recognised as part of the Christian Scriptures, and the question of the canon was settled. Dr. Loofs says: "Gnosticism influenced dogmatic progress chiefly by causing the formal settlement of genuine apostolic standards in the church in reply to its appeal to false apostolic writing and tradition."<sup>1</sup>

MARCION (c. 150 A.D.) represents a more sober form of Gnosticism. Originally a Christian of Sinope, he was converted to Gnosticism at Rome by the Syrian Cerdo, and struck out a course of his own. He laid the greatest stress on the opposition between the Demiurgus and the true God. The former is the God of the Old Testa-

<sup>1</sup> A full and clear account of Gnosticism will be found in Fisher's *History of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 51 ff.



ment, and is full of wrath. Mercy is unknown to him. The true God is all mercy and love, and was unknown till Christ revealed Him. Christ was the incarnation of this God in a phantasmal body. His death, or seeming death, was the work of the jealous Demiurgus. Marcion carried his hostility to the Old Testament and Judaism to extreme lengths. He makes Christ descend into Hades and release the heathen, even Sodomites and Egyptians, while passing by Old Testament saints. Paul was Marcion's favourite apostle, indeed the only true apostle, because of his opposition to the ancient law. Of course this is a perversion of Paul's position. Thus, according to Marcion, the law was not a school-master unto Christ. Christianity was a sudden beginning without preparation of any kind. Tertullian well says: "Marcion's proper and chief work is separating law and gospel." His ethical teaching was severe; celibacy was enjoined. He denied the resurrection of the body. His system was all antitheses—law and gospel, Judaism and Christianity, nature and grace, the just and the gracious God. His New Testament consisted of Paul's epistles and Luke's Gospel with some revision. He is the first example of the application of subjective criticism to Scripture,—the first, but not the last. There were



Marcionite churches still in the east in the sixth century.

3. MONTANISM is an interesting phenomenon, as an example of practical rather than doctrinal error. Montanus appeared in Phrygia (c. 160 A.D.), claiming to possess the New Testament gift of prophecy. Associated with him were two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla. The gift was alleged to be the fulfilment of the promise of the Paraclete in St. John's Gospel. The Paraclete spoke in Montanus. Ecstasy was an invariable accompaniment of the prophetic gift. The end of all things was at hand. Pepuza in Phrygia was to witness the descent of the New Jerusalem. The ethical teaching of Montanism was severe. Fastings were frequent; second marriages were forbidden; flight in time of persecution also was forbidden; martyrdom was held in great honour; there is no forgiveness for gross sin after baptism. The Montanists were strictly orthodox, holding fast the rule of faith. Probably the Church at first felt itself in difficulty in regard to Montanism, which had many good points. It was to some extent a reassertion of the continuous spiritual life of the Church, claiming in perpetuity the gifts of the Spirit for Christians. Still there was extravagance from the first, and probably this element gradually

gained the mastery. Montanus is reported as saying: "Behold, man is like a lyre, and I hover over (him) like a plectrum. Man is asleep, and I wake him"; and Maximilla: "After me is no prophetess, but the end." Another saying attributed to him is: "I am the Father and the Son and the Paraclete." Prisca claimed to have seen Christ in vision.

Montanism spread from Asia Minor to Rome, Thrace, North Africa. In the latter country Tertullian embraced it, attracted probably by its fanatical leanings and austere discipline. His adherence at least vouches for its doctrinal orthodoxy. He speaks of the law and prophets as the infancy of religion, the gospel as its youth, the Paraclete as its maturity. Praising the severe morals of the sect, he lays down the principle that everything is forbidden that is not permitted—the reverse of a principle advocated by some in our day. The exclusion of gross sins after baptism from the possibility of forgiveness is quite to his taste as a protest against prevailing moral laxity. He writes: "The church indeed will forgive offences, but the church of the Spirit through a spiritual man, not the church (consisting in) the number of bishops." "The authority of the church fixed the difference between clergy (*ordinem*) and people . . . so

where there is no session (*consensus*) of the clergy, thou both offerest and baptizest and art priest to thyself alone. But where there are three persons there is the church, even if they be laymen" (*sed ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici*), surely a Christian saying from a remarkable man (Loofs, p. 95). Modern Irvingism seems a counterpart of Montanism. Montanism had its share in demonstrating the need of fixed standards of doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

4. SABELLIANISM is the first example of heresy in the proper sense, and an important one. It arose at the close of the second and the beginning of the third century, and took two forms, to which the names *Dynamic* and *Modal* have been given. According to the first there was a special indwelling of God in Christ, according to the second Christ was the Father incarnate. The second was the form held by Sabellius himself.

<sup>1</sup> Wesley's Journal (*Works*, ii. 204): "By reflecting on an odd book which I had read in this journey, *The General Delusion of Christians with regard to Prophecy*, I was fully convinced of what I had long suspected: (1) That the Montanists, in the second and third centuries, were real scriptural Christians; and (2) that the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well-nigh lost, but that dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all as either madness or imposture."

The professed object of the doctrine was to guard the monotheism of Scripture, with which the deity of Christ seemed to conflict. Sabellians charged their opponents with ditheism or tritheism. A name used for the doctrine was Monarchianism, as acknowledging only one principle in the Godhead (*ἀρχή* = principium). Tertullian bluntly called the second form, which is Sabellianism proper, Patripassianism, saying of Praxeas: "He expelled prophecy (Montanism) and brought in heresy, drove away the Paraclete and crucified the Father."

(1) DYNAMIC SABELLIANISM.—Its advocates were Theodotus, the tanner of Byzantium, who came to Rome *c.* 190 A.D., and whom the bishop, Victor, excluded from the Church; Asclepiodotus and Theodotus, the money-changer in the time of the bishop Zephyrinus (199–217); Artemon or Artemas (*c.* 240), also at Rome. The chief representative, however, is Paul of Samosata, the worldly bishop of Antioch (since about 260 A.D.). Christ was said to be a mere man, although born in a miraculous way, in whom the Spirit or the Logos or Christ dwelt in a special degree. This special endowment took place at the baptism in the Jordan, and it accounts for the miracles of Christ and the wisdom of his teaching. Some members of this school asserted that

theirs was the original doctrine of the Church, but that it had been corrupted,—a bold and untrue assertion. The Logos was regarded as the impersonal wisdom of God, like reason in man. Three synods were held at Antioch on Paul's case (264–269 A.D.). The first two were inconclusive, but at the third he was condemned and deposed. He retained his position till 272, when the sentence was carried into effect by the emperor Aurelian, who was in communication with the bishops of Italy and Rome. This is the first example of imperial intervention in church affairs.

(2) MODAL SABELLIANISM is the more subtle and dangerous form of the doctrine. According to it, Father, Son, and Spirit are simply different designations of God in different manifestations. Father, Son, and Spirit are God, but all personal distinctions are denied. The chief teachers appear at Rome,—Praxeas of Asia Minor (*c.* 190 A.D.), Noetus of Smyrna and his followers Epigonus and Cleomenes (*c.* 220), Sabellius of the Pentapolis (*c.* 215), Beryllus of Bostra (*c.* 244); and it is said that the Roman bishops Victor, Zephyrinus, and Callistus, who condemned the first form of Sabellianism, for a time at least countenanced the second form (Seeberg, p. 127; Loofs, p. 102). The Roman presbyter Hippolytus opposed

the bishops on this account, and the bishops withdrew their approval. Callistus excommunicated Sabellius. Praxeas said that Father and Son are the same person, and appealed to Isa. 45<sup>5</sup>, John 10<sup>30</sup>, 14<sup>9, 10</sup>. He distinguished in Jesus Christ between the Son (= the flesh, man, Jesus) and the Father (= the Spirit, God, Christ), and said: "The Son suffers, but the Father suffers with him." Noetus and Sabellius also ascribe this twofold character to God; He is both invisible and visible, unbegotten and begotten, incapable and capable of suffering. Sabellius applies the term Son-Father (*υἱοπάτωρ*) to God. These men seem to have been influenced, in part at least, by concern for Christ's complete Godhead, as well as by concern for the divine unity.

It is worth remarking that Sabellianism was never dealt with by any Council or representative church authority. In view of the informal way in which Scripture gives us the doctrine of the Godhead, it was inevitable that such a theory should appear. All was said for it that could be said; and while the Church was feeling its way to some adequate formula, it is scarcely to be wondered at that some leaned to the Sabellian doctrine. But it never gained much influence. Whether other errors might not have been left in the same way to the judg-



ment of Christians without official action, is an open question. Sabellianism has always existed to a certain extent in unavowed forms, and seems to be held still by some who dislike the definitions of the creeds. Dr. Seeberg writes (p. 128): "We take leave of the ingenious attempts of the Monarchian theologians with mixed feelings. They do not satisfy us, but their statement of the problem attracts and fascinates us. They wished to explain the God-manhood of Christ from its historical manifestation without regard to current formulæ. They did not reach their end, for on their line of teaching the Scripture idea of redemption finds no expression ; and no explanation of the form and the words of Jesus is possible on it. But over against this, again, stand far-reaching observations, which contemporaries did not understand and could not understand by their theological formulæ. Especially these: (1) The strong emphasis on the personal unity of God, and the attempt to harmonise it with the Deity of Christ. Here the Sabellian position may not have been without influence on Athanasius. (2) The attempt to reach the God-manhood of Christ, not from the view-point of the two natures, but of personal life, and so from the will (especially Paul of Sam.)."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On Monarchianism, see Fisher, *ibid.* p. 99.



### III

#### FIRST STEPS IN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

##### THE APOLOGISTS

*Quadratus*, c. 125 A.D., a fragment in *Eusebius*. *Aristides*, c. 125, *Apol.* The *Apologies of Melito of Sardis*, *Apolinarius*, *Miltiades*, c. 175, addressed to *Marcus Aurelius*, are lost. *Justin Martyr*, c. 150, *Two Apologies and Dialogue*. *Tatian*, c. 150. *Athenagoras*, c. 170. *Theophilus of Antioch*, c. 181. *Minucius Felix: Octavius*, c. 180.

[JUSTIN was born about the close of the first century at Neapolis, the ancient Sychem, and was trained in the knowledge of Greek philosophy. He sought truth and peace first among the Stoics, Peripatetics, Pythagoreans, and Platonists, and was dissatisfied with all. By accident he met an old man on the seashore who pointed him to Christ as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. He became a Christian without ceasing to be a philosopher, and devoted his life to the work of a lay-

evangelist. In his travels he visited Rome twice, and suffered martyrdom there about 163 or 166 A.D.]

This outburst of apologetic literature at so early a date is a remarkable phenomenon. The apologetic purpose explains the limitation of topics and the line of argument often employed. We must not expect to find a complete statement of the faith. The writers naturally seek to make the best use of common ground of argument with their opponents. Their appeals to nature and reason, and their explanations of the knowledge of truth in the heathen world, are full of interest. All the writers named above, save the last one, are Greek. The work of Minucius Felix is believed to be the first considerable Christian work in Latin. Afterwards we have more important apologetic writings by Origen, Tertullian, and others.

All the Apologists regard Christianity as in Justin's words "the only safe and useful philosophy." Sometimes heathenism is described as the worship of devils, its follies and impurities are ruthlessly exposed. At other times the elements of truth in it are frankly acknowledged. But the two views are no doubt reconcilable. The Apologists are fond of tracing the good in

heathenism to Old Testament sources, or to the work of the Logos in human nature.<sup>1</sup> The truth found in fragments in heathenism is given completely in Christianity. Justin says, the heathen who lived according to the Word, such as Socrates, Herakleitus, were Christians, though they might be called atheists.<sup>2</sup> Great stress is laid on the evidence of Old Testament prophecy and its fulfilment. It may be interesting to notice the exposition of Christian truth presented to emperors and a heathen public.

The unity of God, the Creator, Framers, and Sustainer of the world, is emphasised. The invisible God is unbegotten, without name, eternal, incomprehensible, immutably above the reach of need, free from all passion. He made the world of nothing, and gave it its form.—The instrument in creation is the Logos,<sup>3</sup> who, eternally immanent in God, issues forth by the divine power and will for the purpose. When he is described as the “first-begotten work of the Father,” “the first offspring,” we must remember the tentative, unformed language of

<sup>1</sup> The revealed Logos in contrast with the immanent (*προφορικὸς* and *ἐνδιάθετος*).

<sup>2</sup> Let us also remember Tertullian's noble saying about “the soul naturally Christian.”

<sup>3</sup> Logos = the Word.

the day.<sup>1</sup> His proceeding from the Father is compared to the kindling of one fire by another, nothing being lost in the act. He is not an angel, but God ("God," not "the God"); and therefore worship belongs to him as to the Father (Justin). The Logos reveals God to men. It was he who appeared to men in the Old Testament. The double meaning of Logos (reason and speech) is much played upon, human reason being used as an illustration. Only germs of the Logos dwelt in the prophets, whereas he was completely revealed in Christ. The philosophical idea of the Logos doubtless exerts an influence, but the Christian Logos is an independent personality. Theophilus of Antioch first uses the term *Trias*, as Tertullian afterwards *Trinitas*.—Both sides of the incarnation are maintained. Christ was God and man, his humanity being veiled in the flesh, and both natures were seen in his work. "God suffered" (Melito). While there is no explanation of his death, the fact that it brings forgiveness and frees from the power of death and the devil is stated. The freedom of

<sup>1</sup> "First offspring . . . not as having come into existence (*γενόμενον*); for God, who is from the beginning, being eternal reason, had the Logos in himself, being eternally rational" (Athenagoras). "This power was begotten from the Father by his power and will, but not by division as if the Father's nature were divided" (*ibid.*).

man to repent and believe in order to salvation is asserted. The cross, the water of baptism, faith and penitence, are means of salvation. Baptism in the name of the Triune God is mentioned; without it is no salvation; it brings forgiveness and regeneration (Justin); it is often spoken of as "illumination." Of the eucharist Justin says: "We have been taught that the food that is blessed by the prayer of his word, by which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, are the flesh and blood of the Jesus who was made flesh."<sup>1</sup> Justin mentions the reading of the prophets and gospels, preaching and exhortation and common prayer, in public worship.—The resurrection of the body is strongly advocated, as a point of superiority to philosophical teachings. Thus only is the idea of human nature realised. The prophets foretold a first and second coming of Christ. The writers are not agreed whether the soul is immortal in itself: Justin and Tatian deny this; Theophilus says it was capable of either fate. Christ will return in glory as Judge, the world will be consumed, and just and unjust will receive

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Seeberg says: "Of course these words do not teach transubstantiation. The meaning is merely that just that food, which by transformation nourishes the body, is Christ's body and blood to faith."

their reward. Justin also holds the thousand years' reign.

While much is omitted in the exposition of which this is a bare sketch, the topics are skilfully chosen for presentation to a heathen audience. The philosophical element does not seem excessive beside the Scriptural. The Logos-doctrine is Scriptural. There is no reason why in treating of it Christian writers should not appeal to current notions, as long as they made clear their own different conception. Modern apologists take the same course. Heathen readers, familiar with their own conception of the Logos, could not fail to see the difference in the Christian interpretation and application. The Apologists are the first Christian theologians in the broad sense of the term, giving the world as they do a complete and reasoned view of the faith they hold. The difference between them and the Gnostics is obvious. With them the religious interest is supreme.

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## IV

FIRST CHRISTIAN FATHERS IN THE WEST:  
IRENÆUS († c. 200 A.D.), TERTULLIAN (c. 160—  
230), CYPRIAN († 258)

[IRENÆUS, born about 120 A.D., spent his early life in Smyrna, where he was familiar with Polycarp, who again was a disciple of St. John. In a severe persecution at Lyons, in Gaul, an account of which is preserved in a letter of the churches of Lyons and Vienne to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, the aged bishop Pothinus perished, and Irenæus took his place. His life seems to have accorded with his name, "Peaceful"; for we find him on two occasions pleading with the two Roman bishops in favour of peace, first with Eleutherus, asking him to deal gently with Montanists, and secondly with Victor, urging him not to break with the Christians of Asia Minor because of their observance of Easter at a different date from western Christians. His great work, *Against Heresies*, is our chief authority on



Gnosticism ; the first part is extant in the original Greek, the remainder in a Latin translation.

TERTULLIAN, a native of Carthage, was born about 160 A.D., of heathen parents. After an evil youth, he was converted to Christianity about 190 A.D. His profession as advocate partly explains his strenuous, declamatory style. In his case the style is the man—impetuous, stormy, full of fire and passion, but fascinating in his unique originality and force. Whether he was a presbyter or not is uncertain. Jerome says he was ; but in several passages Tertullian seems to class himself with laymen. Jerome also says that he lived to old age. His relation to Irenæus has been compared to that of Luther to Melancthon. He was a bitter, uncompromising controversialist, like too many more in the early Church. His writings may be classified as practical, Montanist, controversial. His Montanism accentuated the stern ascetic spirit that breathes in his writings on Christian life and practice. He did excellent service in his polemic against Gnostics and Sabellians. His longest work is against Marcion, in five books, in which he deals with Marcion's Gnostic positions one by one, arguing that the Creator is not a different being from God, and that Paul's epistles and Luke's Gospel do not contradict

the Old Testament. But his best works are those which are devoted to Christian Apology, such as the *Testimony of the Soul* and *Apologeticus*.

CYPRIAN was born at Carthage about 200 A.D., of wealthy heathen parents. He was a teacher of rhetoric by profession. He became a Christian about 246 A.D., and two years later was made bishop. His entire Christian life and work thus covered only twelve years. His fame is that of an administrator. His tact in dealing both with church opponents and heathen persecutors shows that he was a born ruler of men. He bears little resemblance to Tertullian, whom he so greatly admired. His style is as smooth and flowing as Tertullian's is strong, abrupt, and even harsh. Harnack says, "Cyprian polished the language that Tertullian had made, sifted his thoughts, rounded them off, and turned them into current coin."]

In these as in other writers of the west we find the practical spirit of the west asserting itself both in regard to the subjects treated of and the mode of treatment. Not one of the three Fathers named above shows any sign of philosophical genius. Tertullian is quite hostile to philosophy, which he regards as the parent of all heresy. Gnosticism and Sabellianism, which

it was his mission to combat, were in his view confirmations of his opinion. "What," he asks, "has Athens to do with Jerusalem, the Academy with the Church, heretics with Christians? They produce Stoic and Platonic and dialectic Christianity." He calls philosophers "the patriarchs of heretics."<sup>1</sup> By the way, his own teaching bears the stamp of his own early Stoic and legal training; he refers with admiration to Seneca. Irenæus was a native of Asia Minor, and represents the type of Christianity in that country. He and Tertullian agree in their opposition to the Gnostic spirit and in the practical turn of their teaching. The three Fathers paved the way for Augustine.

In regard to the doctrine of God, the Gnostic separation of the Creator from God is condemned, as well as the separation of law and gospel. God is rational spirit; intelligence, spirit, idea, therefore, are not, as Gnostics said, separate beings, but aspects of God's being. God is known by revelation, not speculation. We must not ask idle, childish questions, what

<sup>1</sup> Shedd, *ibid.* i. 122, 127. Here is a specimen of the paradoxes which abound in Tertullian: "The Son of God is crucified; we are not ashamed, because we ought to be ashamed. And the Son of God died; it is perfectly credible, because it is absurd. And being buried he rose again; it is certain, because it is impossible."

God was doing before creation, how the Son was begotten, etc. "Without God, God cannot be known" (Irenæus). God is incomprehensible in his majesty, but comprehensible in his love in Christ. "Just as those who see the light are within the light and partake of its glory, so those who see God partake of his glory" (*ibid.*). God's justice and mercy are not to be assigned to two Gods. "From the beginning God is good as well as just" (Tertullian). Over against sin justice becomes severity and anger. The end of God's ways is the salvation of men. "Nothing is so worthy of God as the saving of man" (*ibid.*). By his word and will he created the world out of nothing. The antitheses in it combine into unity like the tones of the lyre (Irenæus). The one God is triune. The Scripture and the Church teach it (Irenæus). Baptism assumes it (Tertullian). Tertullian says that two persons (*personæ*) partake in the one divine substance (*substantia*) in the second and third place; thus in the one substance live three persons. "Three not in condition but in degree; not in substance but in form; not in power but in aspect; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power." In all this, as in what follows, Gnosticism was in view, and perhaps Sabellianism. Tertullian adopts a

Stoic idea when he ascribes a body in some sense even to God. "Everything is body *sui generis*. Who will deny that God is body, although he is spirit?" Sin is not the result of anything in man's original nature, but of the abuse of freedom. Both Tertullian and Irenæus prepare the way for the doctrine of original sin. The race sinned and died in Adam. Evil has become natural to man, and is transmitted by birth. "Evil is in a sense natural to the soul, for corruption is a second nature; so however that good is its divine and real nature, for this is from God, and is not so much extinguished as obscured" (Tertullian, Seeberg, p. 82).

Respecting Christ's Person Irenæus keeps close to Scripture teaching. As to the mode of the generation of the Logos we know nothing. It is enough that "the Son was ever coexistent with the Father." His work was always the revealing of the Father to angels and archangels, and then to men. He is the "measure of the Father." He is therefore eternally God like the Father. Jesus is not to be separated from Christ, as the Gnostics taught. Jesus Christ is "truly man, truly God, the Word united to the flesh." He assumed a soul as well as a body. The real humanity and suffering are asserted in the interest of redemption.

Tertullian's teaching on this subject follows the Apologists more than Irenæus does. The Logos is an independent person, who proceeded from God, was begotten of him. "There was a time when the Son was not," a saying to be explained by other sayings. Since Father and Son are the same divine substance, they are to be distinguished, not by division or separation, but by distinction and disposition (economy). The Logos is only a part of the Father's substance. "For the Father is the whole substance, but the Son a derivation and portion of the whole"; another doubtful utterance.<sup>1</sup> The Logos became man by birth of the Virgin. "How did the Word (*sermo*) become flesh? By transfiguration in the flesh? Or by putting on flesh? By putting it on." In order to die for man's redemption Christ took real human flesh along with a human soul. There are in him two substances, the divine and the human, which latter again unites in itself body and soul, which, however, combine into unity in one person. "We see a twofold state not confused but conjoined in one person, God and the man Jesus." Yet each nature retains its peculiar character and acts by itself. The divine cannot suffer; yet Tertullian speaks of "God's sufferings." Thus Tertullian

<sup>1</sup> He seems to have Sabellianism in view.



was the first to outline the definition both of the Trinity and Christ's Person. Dr. Loofs may well say: "Tertullian is more than the creator of ecclesiastical Latin; he is the founder of Catholicism before Augustine."

On Redemption Irenæus speaks more fully than Tertullian. Christ became man in order to "recapitulate"<sup>1</sup> the race in himself (Eph. 1<sup>10</sup>), "so that we might recover in Christ Jesus what we had lost in Adam." He did what we and Adam should have done; God accepts his obedience for our disobedience. By his fellowship with humanity the latter is reconciled to God. By the Fall humanity fell under the dominion of the devil. By keeping God's law Christ has "judicially" conquered the devil, and broken the power of death by his resurrection. All this line of thought seems based on Rom. 5<sup>12</sup> ff. The agent in bringing about the new union with God is the Holy Spirit. The fruit of all this is stated to be, not forgiveness, but immortality. As the curse of sin consisted in mortality, so salvation is immortality.

<sup>1</sup> Recapitulate means not merely sum up, but repair, restore, compensate, represent. "When he became incarnate and was made man, he recapitulated in himself the long succession of men, offering salvation to us in summary form (*in compendio*), so that we might recover in Christ Jesus what we had lost in Adam, namely, a being after God's image and likeness."



According to Irenæus, the Holy Ghost and the title to eternal life are given in Baptism. Faith is necessary, but this is described simply as acknowledgment of Christ and the Father, readiness to keep his law. "To believe in Christ is to do his will" (Irenæus).

Tertullian's teaching on this subject is important, because it is the germ of later western doctrine. He views man's relation to God under a legal aspect. The Gospel is spoken of as a "new law" (a phrase used long afterwards by the Council of Trent). Our first salvation is in Baptism, which brings "remission of offences, release from death, regeneration of the man, reception of the Holy Spirit." Sanctifying power belongs to the water. The Spirit is conceived, in Stoic fashion, as something material which enters into the water. For subsequent sin satisfaction must be made to God by penances. Man can keep, not only God's precepts but his counsels, and so acquire merit with God. Here we have in outline the later doctrine of penance.

The resurrection of the flesh is asserted by both Fathers in opposition to the Gnostic denial. Irenæus holds millenarian doctrine. He is also said to hold an actual presence of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper; Tertullian seems to do the same (Seeberg, p. 94). According to a common

thought in those days, the Supper is viewed as one of the means of immortality, even as in later times the incarnation is supposed to have some mysterious effect on the receiver's body in the eucharist.

We must refer to another line of teaching in Irenæus and Tertullian, which has been touched on already (p. 26). It is often said that Gnosticism and Montanism led to the formation of the New Testament canon. This is true in the sense that they led the Church to define its position more clearly, but not in the sense that it adopted any new position. Dr. Seeberg well says: "The idea that Gnosticism and Montanism wrung the New Testament canon from the Church is liable to be misunderstood. The extent of the New Testament was not more firmly fixed at the end of the second century than at its beginning." The local uncertainty as to a few books, and the few references to outside books as scripture, make no substantial change in this position. In appealing to the authority of these writings, the Church was following existing usage. Inspiration was an inference from this authoritative character. "The special nature of the Gnostic opposition led to great importance being ascribed to these writings; and that not so much because they sprang from apostles as

because they originated in the primitive age of the Church, and therefore contained the actual Gospel." "The partially new point was that the Church formally and deliberately used the canon as the norm and basis of church doctrine."

Other quotations from Irenæus may be useful. Their bearing will be easily seen. "He who is unknown in his majesty to all those whom he made is ever known in his love through him by whom he made all things." "Not that God stood in need of the angels to do those things which he had determined beforehand to do, as if he had no hands. For there is ever with him the Word and wisdom, Son and Spirit, through whom and in whom he freely and spontaneously made all things." "For in what way could we be partakers of the adoption of sons, unless we had received from him through the Son that communion which is with himself, and unless the Word, made flesh, had entered into fellowship with us? Wherefore also he passed through every stage of life, restoring to all the communion which is with God." "For in the first Adam we fell, not having kept his law; but in the second Adam we were reconciled, being obedient unto death."

Hippolytus, a presbyter of Rome, a contemporary of Irenæus and Tertullian, was a volumin-

ous writer (199–217 A.D.). He says of God, “Being alone he was manifold (πολύς). For he was neither without reason nor wisdom nor power nor will.” The Father begot the Logos from his own substance when he would create the world. He shares God’s nature (οὐσία). “For the Father is one, but there are two Persons, because there is the Son also; then the third is the Holy Spirit.” The pre-incarnate (ἄσαρκος) Logos became man, assuming flesh and a rational soul. “This God (ὁ Θεός) became man for us”; “and the unsuffering Logos of God came under suffering.” “For neither was the Word, pre-incarnate and by himself, perfect Son (although the Word was perfect, being only-begotten), nor could the flesh exist by itself apart from the Word, because it had its subsistence in the Word.”<sup>1</sup> The theology may be crude, but it looks in the right direction.

But now came another question. Gnostics introduced false Scriptures, misinterpreted the genuine Scriptures, and appealed to secret traditions. How were their claims to be tested? Irenæus and Tertullian appealed to the rule of faith, which in substance at least came down from the apostles and Christ, and also to the churches which had existed from apostolic

<sup>1</sup> Seeberg, p. 87.

times and could show an unbroken succession of bishops from then. What Scriptures had these churches always received? How had they always understood the Scriptures? Let the heretical churches, says Tertullian, show that their churches had as the first bishop some one of the apostles or their companions. What Scriptures and interpretations of Scripture are received and always have been received at Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Jerusalem? Rome is referred to with emphasis. Irenæus writes: "It is necessary that every church have recourse to this church on account of its higher dignity"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Ad hanc (ecclesiam) propter potentiorē principalitatem necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est eos qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his qui sunt undique conservata est ea quae est ab apostolis traditio." "To this (church) on account of its greater dignity it is necessary that every church resort, *i.e.* those who are faithful from every side, in which (church) the tradition which is from the apostles has been preserved by those who are from every side." Roman controversialists say that *principalitas* = supremacy and *convenire ad* = agree with. The first may = supremacy or simply pre-eminence, the second cannot = agree with, but simply resort to. *Necesse est* does not = ought, but simply necessity of any kind. Irenæus seems to be referring to the fact that to Rome as the world's centre the members of other churches were constantly resorting; he adds that by them the apostolic tradition was preserved, *i.e.* by these Christians visiting Rome and so keeping up the common tradition of the churches. Moreover, if the passage bears the meaning put on it by modern Roman writers, how is it that it

(*potentioorem principalitatem*). There is common sense in this appeal.<sup>1</sup> Tertullian says: "Let this be a presumption against all heresies that that is true which is first, that is spurious which is later." Still they merely appealed to these churches as witnesses. Then the historical succession could be seen and proved. At the same time it must be admitted that they use a test which was easily capable of perversion and was soon perverted into the doctrine of the Church as the judge of Scripture truth. Irenæus, however, says: "Where the church is the Spirit of God is; and where the Spirit of God is, the Church is and all grace. But the Spirit is truth . . . They who are outside the truth, *i.e.* who are outside the Church." But the Church in Irenæus and Tertullian was not the episcopate, but "the community of those who believe in and fear God and who receive the Spirit of God" (Seeberg). All are priests; "for all the righteous have priestly rank" (Irenæus).

It was this last fateful aspect of the teaching of Tertullian and Irenæus that was fully developed is never appealed to in this sense by old writers, who were on the watch for such passages? Taken in the Roman sense, it would anticipate development by several centuries. See Dr. Bright, *The Roman See in the Early Church*, p. 31, and Salmon, *Infallibility of the Church*, p. 375.

<sup>1</sup> Shedd, *ibid.* i. 149 note.



not long afterwards by Cyprian of Carthage († 258). Let it be noted that both Cyprian and Tertullian belonged to North Africa, both had had a legal training, and Cyprian was an ardent admirer of Tertullian. In asking for one of his books he would say, "Give me the master." Cyprian, it will be seen, took up again Ignatius's thought, applying it in new senses.

Cyprian's view was formed under the stress of controversy respecting the terms on which those who had fallen away (*lapsi*) in time of persecution should be restored to the Church. A practice had grown up for such persons to get certificates (*libelli*) from "confessors,"<sup>1</sup> which were almost like orders to church authorities to receive back the bearers (*libellatici*) to church communion. Cyprian was for a stricter policy. At least the decision lay with the bishops. In this he had common sense and early custom on his side. In Tertullian's day those guilty of grave sins like idolatry were only received back, if at all, after a considerable interval and on condition of open confession and penance. A schism took place at Carthage on the question, led by Novatus; and a new bishop, Fortunatus, was appointed. Then Cyprian elaborated his

<sup>1</sup> Confessors were those who had suffered fines, imprisonment, etc., for the faith.



general doctrine in his treatise, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ* and his epistles. The gist is, as in Ignatius, that the bishop with the enlarged powers that he has acquired since the days of Ignatius, is the centre of unity, and that the life of the Church depends on him. The bishops are the successors of Christ, every bishop being appointed by Christ. He keeps his office as long as he lives a holy life. To disobey him is to disobey Christ. He is the leader of the church, admitting to and excluding from it. He is the depository of true doctrine. The entire Church rests on the united episcopate. "The bishop is in the church, and the church in the bishop, so that he who is not with the bishop is not in the church." No one is a Christian who is not in the Church. "Out of the Church is no salvation." "He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother." The unity is seen in this, that the Lord gave the apostolic authority to Peter first. "The other apostles, indeed, were invested with equal honour and power; but the beginning starts from unity, that the church of Christ may be shown to be one." Accordingly the Roman church is the "mother and root of the Catholic Church." But even in Cyprian's mind this did not mean Roman supremacy. He held the independence of each

bishop and of the episcopate, and withstood Stephen, bishop of Rome, to the face.

A similar development went on at Rome. There the bishops favoured mild treatment of lapsed Christians. Severity was advocated by the presbyter Novatian (251 A.D.), who founded a sect on this strict basis. Callistus of Rome had already led the way in the mild policy. In reference to his conduct the severe Tertullian had used the taunt: "The *pontifex maximus* forsooth, bishop of bishops, announces, 'I will forgive even sins of adultery and fornication to those who repent.'" We see here the jealousy of rival churches. It was like a renewal of the Punic war on another field, and Rome again triumphed in the end; the mild policy became general. It is strange that Novatus and Novatian formed an alliance. But Rome and Carthage were of one mind on the bishop's place and power in the Church, and so on this question opposed to Novatus and Novatian alike.

Another question on which Rome and Carthage differed was whether baptism by heretics was valid, or whether those who had been so baptized were to be rebaptized on joining the Church. Cyprian was for rebaptism, Rome against. Here, too, the Roman view eventually prevailed. The Roman argument was that the efficacy of the rite

depended on the use of the baptismal formula, not on the person of the administrator; the same ground is taken still by Catholic writers. Cyprian's theory of church order and authority was further strengthened by his priestly view of the ministry. Bishops, priests, deacons were put on a level with Jewish high priests, priests, and Levites. "As Cyprian crowned the edifice of episcopal power, so also was he the first to put forward without relief or disguise these sacerdotal assumptions; and so uncompromising was the tone in which he asserted them, that nothing was left to his successors but to enforce his principles and reiterate his language."<sup>1</sup> Here again the germs are found in earlier writers. Justin and Irenæus prepared the way for the sacrificial view of the eucharist (Loofs, p. 121). The administration of the "mysteries" was reserved to the clergy. The presbyters became sacrificing priests, the eucharist became a sacrifice for sin.

The Roman Catholic system owes much to Tertullian and Cyprian. The outlines of its doctrine and polity are found in them. No wonder that Tertullian has always been a favourite with supporters of that system, despite his heretical associations. It only needed Augustine to complete the structure of which these two

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, p. 257.

Fathers had laid the foundations. The constitution of the Church is completely revolutionised by them. The sign of the true Church is no longer the holding of apostolic doctrine, or living faith in Jesus Christ, but union with and subjection to the bishops. "The Church is no longer the communion of believers or an object of faith; it is a matter of divine church-law. Much is unfinished; but the foundation is laid" (Seeberg).

It is refreshing to turn to such a writing as the anonymous Epistle to Diognetus, variously assigned to the first or the second half of the second century. The simplicity of the contents speaks for an early date. The Scripture references are few. It is chiefly a description of the faith and life of the early Christians in the terms of 2 Cor. 6<sup>9</sup> †. In one passage the writer says: "He himself took on him the burden of our iniquities; He gave his own Son as a ransom for us; the Holy One for transgressors, the blameless One for the wicked, the righteous One for the unrighteous, the incorruptible One for the corruptible, the immortal One for them that are mortal. For what else could cover our sins but his righteousness? By what other one could we, the wicked and ungodly, be justified but the only Son of God? O sweet exchange! O unsearchable operation! O benefits surpass-

ing all expectation, that the wickedness of many should be hid in a single righteous One, and that the righteousness of One should justify many transgressors !”

We have only spoken of Cyprian's agreement with Tertullian respecting church polity. It may be well to illustrate the agreement in doctrine generally. He speaks of sin and death passing from Adam to the race. God seeks to save man from both by the law. Then Christ brings a “new law.” He also suffered for our sins, He is our Advocate and Mediator, so that through him we find forgiveness. His blood destroys death. Christ thus gives forgiveness and immortality. This salvation is imparted to men by Baptism, which is the beginning of the new life. In it man receives the Holy Spirit and is born again. This life he has to preserve by faith and the fear of God, by prayer and the reception of grace. Faith is essentially acknowledgment of the divine law and believing the divine promises. But as all men sin after Baptism, the sin has not only to be repented of and openly confessed, but atoned for by good works, especially almsgiving (Seeberg, p. 153). By alms the sinner renders to God the satisfaction due, propitiates God and merits his mercy. By alms we wash away our defilement and renew baptismal grace. The Eucharist

is not an auxiliary in the conflict with sin, but a "sacrifice" which the "priest" offers for sinners and in their name. It is a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ. "The priest officiates in Christ's place, imitates what Christ did, and offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father" (Cyprian in Seeberg, p. 154). Here we see another advance on Tertullian in the wrong direction. Cyprian also held a purifying fire after death.

It should also be noted that Novatian, mentioned above, wrote a work on the Trinity, which Jerome commends as a "great book" and supplying "so to speak an epitome of the work of Tertullian." The Son, it is said, was always in the Father, "lest the Father should not always be the Father." Yet, like Tertullian, he looks forward to the time indicated in 1 Cor. 15<sup>28</sup>. Whether he applies this to the person or the work of the Son is not clear. If the former, we must explain it by the stage of imperfectly developed thought. There are other signs of incompleteness. The true Godhead and true manhood of Christ are emphasised as well as the union of the two. "Let neither the man be subtracted from Christ, nor the divinity be denied . . . The two are united in Christ" (Novatian in Loofs, p. 105).

## V

### FIRST CHRISTIAN FATHERS IN THE EAST: CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, ORIGEN

*Clement* (+ c. 215 A.D.), *Exhortation to Greeks, Paedagogue, Miscellanies.*

*Origen* (c. 185–254 A.D.), *First Principles, Against Celsus, etc.*

[ORIGEN was born in Alexandria of Christian parents, 185 A.D. When his father, Leonides, was martyred, Origen was only restrained by his mother from sharing his fate. From the beginning to the end of his life he was consumed by the passion for knowledge. When only eighteen he was appointed by bishop Demetrius Head of the Catechetical School, which he raised to fame as a school of theology and philosophy. Persecution drove him to Cæsarea, which became his second home for some twenty years. The bishops of Palestine favoured him, while Demetrius turned against him. The former had ordained him presbyter, Demetrius having declared that for a layman like Origen to expound the Scriptures



in public in presence of bishops was against church law. Demetrius deposed Origen from his office as presbyter, alleging false teaching and his literal observance of Matt. 19<sup>12</sup>, which was also against church law. Origen never ceased his indefatigable studies in Scripture as well as in Christian doctrine and philosophy. His Hexapla and Commentaries are monuments of learning, industry, and faith. His sufferings in prison in the Decian persecution caused his death at Tyre, 254. Dr. Schaff says: "He exerted immeasurable influence in stimulating the development of the catholic theology and forming the great Nicene Fathers, Athanasius, Basil, the two Gregories, Hilary, and Ambrose."]

The Alexandrian School carried still further the work of the Apologists in blending philosophy and religion. As Philo tried to unite Judaism and Hellenism, so Clement and Origen tried to unite Christianity and Hellenism. Of them it might truly be said that "they sought to conquer Greek culture for Christianity and Christianity for Greek culture." But no one can doubt that they were Christian believers before they were philosophers. Christianity was to them the supreme interest. They were the "first dogmatic theologians" in the strict sense. CLEMENT was

Origen's teacher and predecessor as Head of the famous Catechetical School at Alexandria.<sup>1</sup> But the scholar was immensely superior to the master in genius and achievements. Origen's only rival in greatness and influence is Augustine, and for originality many would give the palm to the former. Only fragments of his works, unfortunately, remain, and most of these in poor Latin translations. Even these fragments are a never-failing object of interest for their suggestiveness, their influence on later times, and the testimony they bear to the highest speculative genius. Along with simple, childlike Christian faith Origen exercised unlimited licence of speculation. He seems not only to have discussed every truth, but to have shown more or less countenance to every error that appeared in the next centuries. The question as to his orthodoxy became matter of long and serious controversy. As in the case of Augustine afterwards, many of his views never passed into the faith of the Church.<sup>2</sup> In modern days we have seen many examples of a similar combination of Christian faith with boundless licence in speculation.

<sup>1</sup> The first instance of a Christian college or university.

<sup>2</sup> See Westcott's essay in *Religious Thought in the West*; Dr. Bigg's *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, Shedd, *ibid.* i. 288.

As Clement's teaching is substantially identical with Origen's, there is no need to go into detail upon it. To the Greeks, he said, philosophy was a preparation for Christ as the law was to the Jews. Faith is enough for salvation, but knowledge is better. Thus there are two classes of Christians. The perfect Christian, who is the true Gnostic, sees where another believes. He does good for its own sake, not for reward. He avoids not only sinful acts, but every motion of evil desire; he knows himself a child of God, not a servant. He prays always, for prayer is intercourse with God. Clement has the philosophical notion of God as Being without attributes, "being beyond being," yet the Creator of the world. The idea of the *Trias* is common with him. The Logos became man with body and soul. He became a ransom, a propitiation for us, although this thought is carried no farther. Christ's work as teacher, guide, and lawgiver, as the way to immortality, is much more emphasised. Man is bound in the fetters of sin; to sin is natural and common to all, yet all are free and able to accept salvation. Man's co-operation with God is insisted on, quite in the spirit of all Greek theology. The first step is faith, leading to fear, hope, penitence, and finally love and knowledge. Faith is represented as an intellectual act. "Faith is

power unto salvation and eternal life." "The one universal salvation of humanity is faith." But faith points beyond itself to knowledge and love. Here the "Gnostic" reaches the highest life of fellowship with God, continual prayer and holy living. Love of the world ceases. This is the higher Christian Stoicism. Baptism makes a man a member of the church and partaker in salvation. In it he becomes a new man, obtains adoption and immortality. The Eucharist also imparts immortality, unites with Christ and the Holy Spirit. "Clement taught the resurrection of the flesh, and seems to have held the possibility of conversion after death, without laying stress on it."

ORIGEN is "more positive than Clement, Clement more Christian than Origen." Origen's *De Principiis*<sup>1</sup> treats in four books of God, the World, Free Will, and the Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture. His exposition is strongly Biblical, but by means of the allegorical principle he brings in many doubtful and erroneous doctrines. The three senses of Scripture—literal, moral, and spiritual—correspond to body, soul, and spirit in man. The third, in his esteem, is the most important. The same doctrine is to be

<sup>1</sup> The first systematic treatise on Christian doctrine, and the greatest in the early Church.

taken in different senses by the common and the advanced Christian.

"God is a spirit," "God is light," with this Origen begins his doctrine of God, in which the Bible and philosophy are inextricably mingled. God is Being, nay, "beyond being." He is an "intellectual nature," free from all that is material, not bound by space and time—incomprehensible, impassible, above the reach of need; "a *monad* in every respect, and, so to speak, a unit and mind as well as the spring from which all intellectual nature and mind begins." But he is also a Person—the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the world. The one God is primarily God the Father. We know him in the Son, who is his image, his Effulgence, his Wisdom and Word. The Son proceeds from the Father, not by division but in spiritual fashion like the will. Since everything in God is eternal, the generation is an eternal act. The Son has no temporal beginning: "There was never (a time) when he was not." He is spoken of as "the breath (vapor) of God's power, the outshining of His glory. . . . Manifestly they show the Son and the Father to have a common substance. For outshining is *homoousios*,<sup>1</sup> i.e. of one substance

<sup>1</sup> "The expressions *ousia* and *hypostasis* are essentially identical, both denoting substance. The former is Platonic,

with that from which it is the outshining or breath." "If the Son is one with the Father through having the same substance (*ousia*), so, on the other hand, He is a being by himself, a special hypostasis,—two hypostases, but one God; these two have the same will and the same operation." At the same time Origen holds a subordination within the Godhead. The Son is "the second God,"—God, but the Father's image, not the absolute goodness and truth, good and true as the outshining and image of the Father. He is "God," not "the God," not God absolute.<sup>1</sup> While approving the old Christian practice of prayer to Christ, he prefers prayer to the Father through Christ. The Holy Spirit is not active in all rational beings, but only in the souls of saints. He is below the Logos, as the Logos is below the Father. He is not created. He is produced by the Father through the Son before all else. The Father gives being, the Son rational being, the Holy Spirit holy being. The expression *Trias* is familiar to Origen. The Spirit is personal and divine.

the latter Stoic" (Seeberg). Still the distinction afterwards made begins to appear in Origen.

<sup>1</sup> This subordinationism was quoted afterwards in favour of Arianism. Origen was probably led to it by opposition to Sabellianism and by too literal fidelity to Scripture passages, like Mark 10<sup>18</sup>, John 14<sup>28</sup>.



God's work of creation, like everything else in God, is eternal. Originally a definite number of spiritual beings were created, all equal. Bodily existence and its different forms are the result of sin—in the stars, in Satan and demons, and in men, who hold an intermediate place. Thus man's bodily existence is a consequence of sin in a former state. Sin is everywhere the abuse of the gift of freedom.

The Logos took human nature and was God and man—God-man (*theanthropos*).<sup>1</sup> Christ is real man with body and soul. His soul was one that did not fall like the rest, but clave to the Logos from the first. The miraculous birth is affirmed. After the incarnation the Logos and the humanity form one person. Origen strives to maintain the unity of person along with the integrity and union of the two natures. Christ really suffered and died and rose again. After the ascension the human is quite absorbed in the Godhead.

In Christ's work Origen gives the first place to his work as Physician, Teacher, Lawgiver, and Example. Christ brings the new law, which requires worship of the one God, faith in Jesus, the keeping of his commands in a virtuous life, the

<sup>1</sup> It is greatly to be regretted that this fine term, used by Origen, never passed into general use.



doctrine of salvation and ruin. Origen teaches the dependence of salvation on Christ's suffering and death, but his views are not harmonious. Now he speaks of a ransom paid to the devil; again of the propitiation which Christ as high priest offered to God.<sup>1</sup> As Head of the Church, Christ intercedes for us and reconciles us to God. This work extends to angels as well as men. Baptism is the medium of forgiveness and the Holy Spirit. In the Eucharist the Logos and his words become the true food of the soul. The sinfulness of man is earnestly maintained; still free will remains, so that faith is partly man's own act, partly a gift of grace. God gives man, not victory, but the power of victory. Faith is thus imperfectly conceived. It is directed to the teachings of the Church, and is completed by works. Paul's doctrine of justification is reproduced in Origen's commentary on the Romans, but no further use seems to be made of it.

The Church is the community of believers; outside it is no salvation. Christians are priests; but priests in the special sense have special powers. They declare forgiveness of sins, but only the good priest can do this. The process of purifying goes on after death. The good come, clothed with a refined body, into Paradise, "a

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, *ibid.* p. 111.

place of learning, a school of souls." "All, as I think, must come there, even a Paul or Peter." There all life's riddles are solved. The godless fall a prey to the fire of judgment. It is real fire, and the fuel is men's sinfulness. Still it is a cleansing fire, and in the end all, devils as well as men, will be saved.<sup>1</sup> The resurrection of the body in a glorified, spiritual form is taught.<sup>2</sup>

Origen's teaching soon became a subject of dispute, first between Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (c. 260 A.D.), and Dionysius, bishop

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bigg says: "Neither Clement nor Origen is, properly speaking, a Universalist" (p. 292). In this view Dr. Bigg seems to be alone.

<sup>2</sup> Other extracts from Origen: "God the Word was sent as a physician to sinners; but as a teacher of divine mysteries to those already pure and no longer sinning." "Every scripture has a spiritual, but not every one a bodily (literal) sense." "We worship the Father of truth and the Son (who is) the truth, being two objects in person, but one in unison and harmony and identity of will." The following are strong expressions of subordinationism. "The Son is less than the Father, for he is second to the Father; but the Holy Spirit, who pervades the saints alone, is still less." And again: "Of all things produced through the Word, and of all things begotten by the Father through Christ, the Holy Spirit is the most eminent." Still, according to Origen, the generation is eternal. The following is docetic: "The Word remaining the Word in essence suffers none of those things which the body or the soul suffers, as if it became flesh." "His death is set forth not merely as an example of dying for the sake of religion, but also to begin and carry forward the overthrow of

of Rome.<sup>1</sup> The former, who had been a scholar of Origen's, pressed his doctrine of the Son's subordination still farther, in order to render it acceptable to the Sabellians, who seem to have been numerous in Egypt. Some of his flock complained to the bishop of Rome that Dionysius of Alexandria taught that the Son was made and begotten, of a different essence from the Father, and had a beginning of existence. Dionysius of Rome, in his reply, rejects the view that substitutes three powers, and eventually three gods, for the unity. "We must believe," he says, "in God the Father almighty, and in Christ Jesus his Son, and in the Holy Ghost, but that the Logos is united with the God of all. For so the divine Trias and the holy preaching of the unity will be preserved." Dionysius of Alexandria then explains that he has been misunderstood. "There was never (a time) when God was not Father. Christ the

evil and the devil." "From him the divine and human nature began to coalesce, in order that the human by union with the divine might become divine, not only in Jesus, but also in all who believe and take up the life which Jesus taught,—a life leading to friendship and fellowship with God every one who lives according to the precepts of Jesus." "Forthwith and by birth no one is pure from defilement, not even if his life were that of a day."

<sup>1</sup> Shedd, *ibid.* i. 304 note.

Logos was ever both wisdom and power. Being the effulgence of the eternal Light, he is himself also eternal. The Son is ever with the Father." He does not deny the Homousios (consubstantial), though the phrase is not Biblical.

Another opponent of Origen's views was Methodius of Olympus in Lycia († 311), a learned lay-theologian; he represents the Christianity of Asia Minor. Methodius sharply attacks the allegorical method, although he himself uses it occasionally. He will know nothing of the pre-existence of souls, a pre-temporal Fall, and a spiritual explanation of the resurrection; the latter he calls a "destruction" of the resurrection. The following are some points in his teaching. The world is not eternal, but existed potentially in God, who created it through the Word. The attributes of man as created by God are freedom and immortality. Since man is made for eternity, God takes care that it is actual in man. After the Fall has taken place, God introduces death in order that evil may not be immortal. Death, like every other punishment, will issue in good. As an artist breaks a statue, which has been spoilt by an envious rival, and then recasts it, so God acts with man. A favourite idea of Methodius is that in those, who are received into the Church by Baptism, Christ is born. "We must

confess not only his coming in the flesh, born of the Virgin, but a like coming in the spirit of each one of us." We know Christ when he dwells in us. This fellowship in the Holy Spirit brings a new life and aim, which leads to immortality. Here we see the inheritance of St. John and Ignatius.—Faith suppresses sin, but cannot extirpate it; only death does this; yet man is to strive after the destruction of sin in his heart. In this conflict Christ is the Helper and Intercessor. Thus we are to be made strong by faith to keep God's commandments. Orthodoxy, good works, an active, rational life are extolled. There is a strong leaning to the ascetic view of Christian life. Methodius is never weary of extolling the unmarried life.

The differences between the development of doctrine in the east and the west are obvious. The subjects and the modes of treatment differ. Philosophy exerts much greater influence in the east. At the same time the hierarchical spirit is absent there. Episcopacy developed slowly; but it is not put in the foreground. Speculation, not organisation, was the strong point in the east. As already stated, the class of doctrines discussed and defined was different. The west borrowed or adopted the eastern doctrines of God and Christ; but the east never adopted the

western doctrines of man and sin and redemption. It will also be observed how much of Origen's speculations never passed into the faith of the Church. It was so with his idea of eternal creation, the pre-existence of souls, and universalism. His subordination doctrine has only had a limited currency among theologians. Dr. Loofs calls attention to the effect which the change in Church organisation had upon doctrine. "Origen had overcome Monarchianism and Gnosticism; his influence had yet to come to terms with the west and with the traditions of Asia Minor. This negotiation might perhaps have had different results, if the situation had been the same as in the second century, and the *teachers* had been the authority in the Church. But during the life of Origen the Catholic Church had grown to be what it was beginning to be at the time of his birth; and not the theologians as such, but the priests, especially the bishops, were the decisive factors."

## VI

### THE NICENE AGE: ATHANASIUS

[ATHANASIUS was born at Alexandria, of Christian parents, about 297 A.D. A pretty story is told to the effect that Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, saw from his window a number of boys playing at church ceremonies, and on calling them to him found that they had made the young Athanasius bishop. Alexander then took Athanasius into his service. Two early works of Athanasius, *Against the Gentiles* and *On the Incarnation*, showed his powers. He accompanied Alexander as deacon to the Council of Nicæa, and there began the war with Arius which became the work of his life. Succeeding Alexander as bishop of Alexandria in 328 (or 326 according to some), he carried on the conflict without a break by pen and voice, at home, in exile, till his death in 373. "Pillar of the Church," Gregory Nazianzen called him. A braver, purer, gentler champion of the truth never lived.]




The immediate occasion of the Nicene definitions was the rise of Arianism. Arius, an Alexandrian presbyter († 336 A.D.), was a pupil of Lucian of Antioch († 311), who again was a follower of Paul of Samosata, so that Arianism was a direct outgrowth of Sabellianism. Eusebius of Nicomedia, a chief Arian leader, was also a disciple of Lucian. In Arianism, as in Sabellianism, a principal motive was jealousy for the monotheistic idea of God. Arianism sought to preserve it by making Christ a creature—the first of all creatures and the creator of his fellow-creatures, creator and creature at the same time. It made the essence of God consist in unbegottenness, and as the Son is not unbegotten, he cannot be God. Athanasius thus summarises Arius's teaching: "The Son is not unbegotten nor a part of the Unbegotten. He has a beginning, but God is without beginning. God was not always Father, but there was (a time) when he was alone, and not yet Father, but afterwards he became Father. The Son was not always. . . . There was (a time) when he was not, and he was not before he was begotten." The Son is the Logos and the Wisdom of the Father, but is to be distinguished from the Logos immanent in God. The Logos is thus a creature of the Father, called into being to be the Creator

of the world. He is called God and Son of God by courtesy (*κατὰ χάριν*), as others are, but is of different essence from God. By nature he is mutable; but in foresight of his constancy God gave him from the first the glory his virtue would deserve. His unity with the Father is merely one of will.”<sup>1</sup>

Arius showed great skill and zeal in propagating his doctrine, gaining followers in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria.

The first to oppose Arius was ALEXANDER, bishop of Alexandria († 328 A.D.). There are many good points in his reasoning. The Word himself cannot have begun in time, because all things were made by him. If Christ is the effulgence of God, to deny his eternity is to deny the eternity of the Paternal Light. His Sonship is therefore different from that of human beings. He likens the teaching of Arius to that of Ebion, Paul of Samosata, and Artemas. When St. John places the Son in the Father's bosom, he would show that Father and Son are distinct yet inseparable from each other. When the Lord declares himself one with the Father (John 10<sup>30</sup>),

 <sup>1</sup> Even Harnack says: “If the Arian doctrine had conquered on Greek soil, it would in all probability have utterly ruined Christianity, *i.e.* dissolved it in cosmology and morals, and destroyed the religion in religion.”

he proclaims himself the absolute image of the Father.

As ATHANASIUS (c. 300–373 A.D., bishop of Alexandria 328) is the central figure in this period, it may be well to summarise his teaching on the subject. The development of his views extended through his whole life. We may disagree with many of his arguments and modes of statement; but we shall agree with his conclusions. why

Athanasius rightly points out the heathenism of giving the divine name and glory to a creature even by courtesy. A creature can never be the medium of the forgiveness, immortality, and union with God which are man's great need. Such a creaturely mediator is unnecessary. God is not too proud to enter into direct relations with the creature. Besides, would not a mediator also be necessary in the creation of the Logos? <sup>1</sup>

Athanasius jealously asserts the divine unity—the one truth of Sabellianism—but at the same time the distinctness of the Son from the Father. It is expressed in “unity of essence.” <sup>2</sup> The relation is compared to that of the fountain and the stream, the light and the effulgence. The

<sup>1</sup> “It is needful to say that they (the Arians) worship two Gods, one creating and the other created, and two Lords.”

<sup>2</sup> Athanasius does not distinguish *οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*.

Logos is born "of the essence of the Father," of different origin and essence from creatures. The Son proceeds from the Father by generation,—a generation of an ineffable kind, not by the Father's will, for then he would be again classed with the creatures. Father and Son are thus two persons as begetting and begotten, but again in virtue of the same relation they are one being. The terms imply sameness of nature, the Son is consubstantial<sup>1</sup> (*Homoousios*) with the Father: The relation is eternal: "The Father always by nature begetting." We may criticise these terms and discover many defects. Dr. Loofs calls it an "irrational doctrine" (p. 135). Especially do we miss the appeal to the historical revelation in Christ and Scripture. Still there can be no doubt that Athanasius put the immemorial belief of the primitive Church into the language of his own day, and that his one purpose was to exclude at a stroke Sabellianism and Arianism as contradicting that belief. "These thoughts sum up all that the Church had thought and taught about Christ since the days of the apostles: the one Godhead and the divine *ego* of the Son" (Seeberg).

The motive behind all Athanasius's reasoning is

<sup>1</sup> Consubstantial = *homoousios* = of the same substance; see Nicene Creed.

concern for practical religion. Only if Christ is truly God has God entered into humanity, and fellowship with God, forgiveness, and immortality are brought within man's reach. The Word assumed human flesh and became man; he was true God and true man. "He became man, and did not enter into man." "He who was God by nature is born man, that he might be both." The union of the two is indissoluble. The Word was not changed into flesh. Still, since the flesh belongs to the Word, the suffering of the flesh may be ascribed to the Word.

The redeeming effect of the incarnation is put thus: Christ being actually God, he could "deify" the flesh which he assumed; and since that flesh was actually human, humanity is thereby deified. This phraseology is common in Athanasius. "Man would not have been deified unless the Word, who was by nature of the Father, had become flesh." "He became man that we might be made divine."<sup>1</sup> Christ is the Second Adam. We are therefore his members, and partakers of his nature. He was ignorant as to his flesh, in order that to that flesh and so to mankind the knowledge of the Father might be given. He feared Death that we might be saved from that fear and partake in immortality.

<sup>1</sup> Scott, *Nicene Theology*, p. 240.

United with him, we become a temple and sons of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in us. His death is the death of all; he gave his body to death for all, thus fulfilling the divine judgment on sin. This unmerited self-surrender to death is a ransom for the sins of men and the abolition of death. This ransom or sacrifice he presented to the Father, and cleansed us all by his blood from sin. Since we are one body with Christ, his death is our death and his victory over death our victory.<sup>1</sup>

In a similar way Athanasius proves the *homousia* (consubstantiality) of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise we should have two persons, not three. It is his work to sanctify us and make us partakers in the divine nature. "If by mediation of the Spirit we are made partakers in the divine nature, who would be foolish enough to say that the Spirit is of a creaturely nature and not divine?" This may indicate the line of thought.<sup>2</sup>

As the controversy was threatening to divide both the Church and the empire, the emperor Constantine summoned a Council of the whole Church at Nicæa. It met in 325 A.D. The idea of the Council was the emperor's, and the arrangements were all made by the State.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix to Chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See a good note on Athanasius in Fisher, *ibid.* p. 137.



About three hundred bishops assembled, chiefly eastern, but the west had its representatives. Rome was represented by two presbyters. Hosius of Cordova was a leading spirit. The formula finally adopted is ascribed to him along with Eustathius of Antioch and Marcellus of Ancyra. Alexander and Athanasius also took a leading part. Three parties are distinguishable—the Arian under Eusebius of Nicomedia, a Middle party under Eusebius of Cæsarea, and the Orthodox under the leaders just named. First, the small Arian party presented its confession, which was at once rejected with indignation.<sup>1</sup> Then the second party proposed a confession in ambiguous Origenistic terms. It runs: "We believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, the only-begotten Son, first-born of all creation, begotten of the Father before all worlds; through whom also all things were made; who was made flesh for our salvation, and lived among men and suffered and rose again the third day and ascended to the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead," etc. The terms were designedly ambiguous; both orthodox and Arians could use them. The formula no

<sup>1</sup> On Arian evasions, see Bull quoted in Shedd, *ibid.* i. 311 note.



doubt expressed the mind of the majority. The emperor approved, only requiring the addition of the *homoousios* (consubstantial).<sup>1</sup> Then the third party took the formula in hand, and on the plea of leaving no loophole for the Arians, completely changed its character: "We believe in one God Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, *i.e.* of the substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of the same substance (*homoousion*) with the Father, through whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth, who, for us men and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and became man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended to heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead; and in the Holy Ghost. Those who say, there was (a. time) when he was not, and that he was made from things that are not or from another substance or nature, pretending that the Son of God is changed or changeable, the holy,

<sup>1</sup> This celebrated term seems first to have been used by the Gnostics in another connection (Seeberg, p. 63 note). Athanasius himself did not lay much stress upon it. Arians and Semi-Arians objected to it, partly because it was not a Scriptural term, and partly because it might bear a Sabellian sense. But the objections were more ostensible than real.

Catholic Church anathematises." This was the form adopted. The terms leave no room for evasion. They were specially directed against the Arian views. It will be noticed that the term "Logos" is omitted. The emperor gave legal force to the confession, banishing the few (Eusebius of Nicomedia included) who refused to subscribe to the creed. Here we see the State Church in full action.<sup>1</sup>

Other extracts from Athanasius will illustrate his teaching and mode of argument. "And since Christ is God from God, and God's Word, Wisdom, Son, and Power, therefore but one God is declared in the divine Scriptures. For the Word, being Son of the One God, is referred to Him of whom also He is; so that Father and Son are two, yet the monad of the Godhead is indivisible and inseparable." "Just as a river, produced from a spring, is not separate, and yet there are in fact two visible objects and two names; for neither is the Father the Son, nor the Son the Father. For the Father is Father of the Son, and the Son, Son of the Father. For like as the spring is not a river, nor the river a spring, but both

<sup>1</sup> An able review of the whole subject is found in Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, i. 246-376.

are one and the same water which is conveyed in a channel from the spring to the river, so the Father's Deity passes into the Son without flow and without division, and thus, too, we preserve one beginning of Godhead, and not two beginnings, where there is strictly a monarchy." "The Word is an offspring from the essence of the Father." "The Son is different in kind and different in essence from things originate, and on the contrary is proper to the Father's essence and one in nature with it." "But they are two, because the Father is Father and is not also Son, and the Son is Son and not also Father; but the nature is one, for the offspring is not unlike its parent, for it is his image, and all that is the Father's is the Son's . . . For if the Son be other, as an offspring, still he is the same as God; and he and the Father are one in propriety and peculiarity of nature, and in the identity of the one Godhead." The generation is eternal: "And as the Father is always good by nature, so he is always generative by nature." It is plain that the Word is from him, and is always coexistent with the Father. "Being God, he had his own body, and using this as an instrument he became man for our sakes. And on account of this the properties of the flesh are said to be his, since he

was in it, such as to hunger, to thirst, to suffer, to weary, and the like, of which the flesh is capable ; while, on the other hand, the works proper to the Word himself, such as to raise the dead, to restore sight to the blind, and to cure the woman with an issue of blood, he did through his own body. And the Word bore the infirmities of the flesh, as his own, for his was the flesh ; and the flesh ministered to the works of the Godhead, because the Godhead was in it, for the body was God's." "For what the human body of the Word suffered, this the Word, dwelling in the body, ascribed to himself, in order that we might be enabled to be partakers of the Godhead of the Word. And verily it is strange that he it was who suffered and yet suffered not ; suffered because his own body suffered, and he was in it, which thus suffered ; suffered not, because the Word, being by nature God, is impassible." "Man had not been deified, unless the Word who became flesh had been by nature from the Father, and true and proper to him. For therefore the union was of this kind, that he might unite what is man by nature to him who is in the nature of the Godhead, and his salvation and deification might be sure." "From the holy and God-bearing (*θεοτόκου*) virgin he raised up for himself the form of Adam and a new struc-

ture; and so Christ, who was God before all worlds, appeared as man; and we are members of Christ." "All men being lost according to the transgression of Adam, his flesh before all others was saved and liberated, as being the Word's body; and henceforth we, becoming incorporate with it, are saved after its pattern. . . . He is said to be 'First-born from the dead,' not that he died before us, for we had died first; but because having undergone death for us, and abolished it, he was the first to rise, as man, for our sakes raising his own body. Henceforth he having risen, we too from him and because of him rise in due course from the dead." "Therefore the perfect Word of God puts around him an imperfect body . . . that, paying the debt in our stead, He might by himself perfect what was wanting to man. Now immortality was wanting to him, and the way to Paradise." "Now when we are said to be partakers of Christ and partakers of God, the anointing in us and the seal are shown to be not of the nature of creatures, but of the Son's nature through the Spirit in him uniting us with the Father."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The translations in Wace and Schaff's Library of the Fathers and in the Ante-Nicene series published by Clark (Edinburgh) are used where possible.

## VII

### ARIAN CONTROVERSY, 325 TO 381 A.D.

THE decisions of the Nicene Council had still to win their way in the Church. It took half a century for this to be done—a half-century of tangled controversy and strife.<sup>1</sup> A large party, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia, while accepting under pressure the Nicene confession, preferred such ambiguous statements as would retain Arians in the Church. A chief factor in the conflict was the imperial influence. The leaning of the emperor and court swayed the balance now to one side, now to the other. Constantius in the east was a zealous Arian. To all opposition he said, “My will is law.” His brother Constans in the west leaned the other way. Once at least, as far as outward appearance goes, Arianism held the field. The personal fortunes of Athanasius are a faithful index of the situation. As one or the other side prevailed, Athanasius

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin, *The Arian Controversy*.

retired from or returned to his see. The Church in the west, led by Rome, was on the whole true to Athanasius and Nicæa. Athanasius constantly took refuge there. The east was the chief home of Arianism. We have spoken of two parties. To this it came in the end. For a long time there was a confused crowd of parties. But at last minor shades of opinion were weeded out or coalesced, and the two real antagonists were left face to face.

Constantine died in 337. Before his death he tried to carry out a policy of compromise and comprehension. Eusebius of Nicomedia had returned to his see, while Eustathius of Antioch and Athanasius had been banished. Constantius continued his father's latest policy. Athanasius was allowed to return, but again retired to Rome in 340. Eusebius became bishop of Constantinople. At two synods in Antioch (341 and 344 A.D.) his party adopted formulæ of an ambiguous type. "Perfect God from perfect God, begotten of the Father before all worlds." A temporal beginning of the Son and the phrase "of another substance" were condemned; the *homoousion* was avoided. Synods at Rome (341) and Sardica (343) acknowledged the Nicene form.

MARCELLUS of Ancyra († c. 373) occupies a



position by himself. He was a zealous Nicæan solely on Scriptural grounds, in this representing the Christianity of Asia Minor. The terms, Christ, Jesus, Life, Way, Resurrection, Door, Bread, as well as Son of God, belong, he thought, only to the incarnate state. Logos alone describes the pre-existent state. No generation of the Logos can be spoken of. The Logos is a personal power immanent in God, and issuing forth for the work of creation and redemption. What fails to find expression in this view is the personal distinction. The Eusebians accused such a statement of Sabellianism. Athanasius quite recognised Marcellus as orthodox, but evidently considered him old-fashioned. Photinus of Sirmium advanced a doctrine of pure Sabellianism under the shelter of Marcellus's name, but was condemned at synods at Milan (345) and Sirmium (351). The Eusebians also classed Marcellus and Photinus together, but wrongly.

After the death of his brother Constans, Constantius carried on his work of suppression with still greater vigour. The Sirmian formula (351) agreed with the one at Antioch mentioned above. At synods at Arelate (353) and Milan (355) the westerns were compelled to approve the condemnation of the "sacrilegious Athanasius." Opponents were banished (Eusebius of Vercelli,

Lucifer of Calaris, Hilary of Poitiers, Hosius of Cordova, Liberius of Rome). Athanasius fled into the desert, 356 A.D. Arianism held the field. But now divisions broke out in their camp.

Two parties appeared—the Semi-Arians, who wished to hold by the divine unity and Christ's Deity, while avoiding the tendency to Sabellianism which they fancied in the Nicene formula, and the thoroughgoing Arians, to whom, as to Paul of Samosata formerly, Christ was mere man. The former proposed *homoiousios* for *homoousios* ("of like substance" for "of the same substance"). They started from the two persons like Origen, instead of from one nature, as Athanasius did, endeavouring to reach the same result. Thus Origen's teaching again asserted itself. Extreme Arianism was represented by Ætius of Antioch and Eunomius of Cyzicus. Eunomius despised theology as "technology," a not altogether undeserved reproach in those days. God is unbegotten, he said. If then the Son is begotten, he is a creature, and neither of like substance nor of the same substance. The only possible union between Father and Son is a moral one; Euzoius of Antioch said, "The Son is unlike the Father in everything."

Both terms (same and like) were condemned

at the third synod of Sirmium (357 A.D.) under the Arian emperors Ursacius and Valens. Even Hosius, now nearly a hundred years old, subscribed to this decision. A synod at Antioch agreed (358 A.D.). At a synod of Ancyra (358) under Basil of Ancyra it is said: The Son as Son is not a creature of the Father, but "similar in nature"; "if anyone shall say he is *homoousios* or *tautoousios*, let him be anathema." Here plainly Sabellianism is feared. Synods at Sirmium (358), Ariminum and Seleucia (359) held to "like in all things, as the holy Scriptures say and teach." Finally this was adopted, omitting "in all things," with the emperor's approval. A synod at Constantinople (360) simply said "like," omitting "nature or substance" (*οὐσία*). All this indicates that even in the east Semi-Arianism was prevailing over Arianism.

In 361 Constantius was succeeded by Julian the Apostate, who recalled Athanasius from exile. Now began an approximation between the Semi-Arians and Nicæans which Athanasius wisely encouraged. He urged that as the former held the Son to be from the substance of the Father, they were not far from holding "the same substance." At the synod of Alexandria (362) the three hypostases are acknowledged, although the one hypostasis is also approved in the sense of

nature. Athanasius hitherto had used the two terms synonymously. Here they begin to be distinguished and used differently. The synod also taught the *homoousion* (consubstantiality) of the Holy Spirit in opposition to Macedonius, who made the Spirit a minister or helper. Athanasius was banished by Julian, but recalled by Jovian (363). A synod at Alexandria and another at Antioch (363) acknowledged the Nicene faith. At the later synod a number of Arian or Semi-Arian bishops, as Acacius of Cæsarea and Meletius of Antioch, accepted the Nicene Creed, some perhaps in part from politic motives and with verbal reserves, such as interpreting *homos* (same) as *homoios* (like).<sup>1</sup>

The Nicene doctrine was helped to final victory by the "Three Cappadocians," — BASIL THE GREAT of Cæsarea († 379), his brother GREGORY OF NYSSA († c. 394), and his friend<sup>2</sup> GREGORY NAZIANZEN († 389), who were equally famous for their Greek culture and their Christian faith. They approached the subject from Origen's standpoint of the three persons. "They understood and interpreted Athanasius in the sense of Origen's theology" (Seeberg). Basil

<sup>1</sup> Hefele, *History of Councils*, ii. 283.

<sup>2</sup> Their friendship is one of the famous friendships of antiquity. Basil has a noted treatise on the Holy Spirit.

and Gregory Nazianzen composed an anthology of Origen's works, which is of great value for the knowledge of his teaching. The three Fathers are known as the leaders of what is sometimes called the New-Nicene party.

“Athanasius starts from the one divine nature; the threefold personal life within the same is a self-evident postulate, which is not proved. The Cappadocians find their starting-point in three divine hypostases, and they labour to bring these under the idea of the one divine nature. The ideas person (*hypostasis*) and nature (*ousia*, substance) are now sharply distinguished, the former denoting the separate individual existence, the latter the common substance” (Seeberg). The danger of the first was Sabellianism, of the second Tritheism or Polytheism; and in fact as the former charge was brought against Athanasian teaching, so the latter was charged against the later statement.

Now three persons (*hypostases* or *prosopa*) are assumed. The different names correspond to real distinctions. Each person has its own property; that of the Father being unbegottenness, of the Son generation, of the Spirit sending forth. No one of these is subordinate to the rest in nature or dignity. Divinity equally belongs to all; this is inferred from their

possession of the same energy. This is quite Origen's line of thought. Thus the *homoousios* is justified. The nature is identical; the persons, while the same in essence, have each their own peculiarity. Here then we have both unity and plurality. The attempts to illustrate these mysteries by parallels from human nature cannot be pronounced successful; *e.g.* the common humanity of three men is paralleled with the common divinity of the three divine persons. It is easy to see where the likeness fails.

The Cappadocians rendered great service in emphasising the doctrine of the Spirit. Belief about him was yet far from clear and definite, some thinking of him as an energy, others as a creature, others as God, others again renouncing all definite teaching. The Macedonians often asked, "Where is it written, the Spirit is God?" On the other hand, it is easy to show, was the reply, by Scripture and the Baptismal Creed, that he is a person like the Father and the Son, seeing that he shares the same divine energy. Therefore the same divine nature and dignity belong to him, he is *homoousios* (consubstantial) and to be honoured with the same worship. The Cappadocians appealed on the subject to Fathers like Irenæus, Clement of Rome, Dionysius of Rome and Dionysius of



Alexandria, Origen, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Firmilian, Meletius. His specific operation is seen in completing the work of redemption, uniting man with the Word, and imparting to him the gifts of God.<sup>1</sup> His relation to the Father is denoted by sending forth and procession. We also find the phrase "from the Father through the Son." The Cappadocians certainly freed the Nicene doctrine from the taint of Sabellianism. Whether they were equally successful in guarding against the appearance of Tritheism is doubtful. The living, personal God is hidden behind three Persons and one nature. By way of compensation the Father is regarded as the representative or principle of the Godhead, and from him Son and Spirit proceed.

In the west the Nicene doctrine established itself firmly under the emperors Valentinian and Gratian and the bishop Damasus of Rome. The Roman synod (369 or 370) said, "Father and Son

<sup>1</sup> "He enlightens all with the knowledge of God, inspires the prophets, instructs lawgivers, perfects priests, strengthens kings, trains the righteous, magnifies the prudent, works gifts of healing, gives life to the dead, sets free the captives, raises strangers into sons. These things he works through the birth from above. . . . Through him the weak are made strong, the poor become rich, the ignorant through the Word are wiser than the wise. . . . He dwells entire in each one, and is entire with God. He ministers not his gifts as servant, but distributes them of his own authority" (Basil).



are of one essence or substance, also the Holy Spirit." Rome and Alexandria stood together all along. Theodosius the Great made this doctrine the law of the empire (380); while tolerating the Macedonian party in the east. In 381 he summoned a General Council at Constantinople; it consisted of a hundred and fifty eastern bishops. A Macedonian party still remained stubborn; but left to themselves, they gradually died out. The Council simply reaffirmed the Nicene formula. In 382 there was another synod at Constantinople contemporaneously with one at Rome. Correspondence between them sealed the general acceptance of the Nicene doctrine. And so finally Athanasian doctrine became the creed of the State. Arianism passed over to the newly converted Goths.<sup>1</sup>

The Nicene Creed in its present form has been generally ascribed to the Council of Constantinople (381); but this is now known to be a mistake. It is not attributed to this Council till the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and it is already quoted in 374 by Epiphanius. Really it is the baptismal formula of the Church at Jerusalem, revised by Cyril of Jerusalem. After

<sup>1</sup> The writer almost needs to apologise for entering into so much intricate detail. He can only say that a complete account would be far more intricate.

500 A.D. it came into general use, instead of the old Nicene form. It runs: "We believe in one God almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and ascended to heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spake through the prophets; in one holy, catholic and apostolic church; we confess one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

Without interruption Dr. Seeberg at once follows the doctrine of the Trinity to its con-

clusion in the east in John of Damascus (c. 750) and in the west in Augustine's *De Trinitate* († 430). In both cases one or two points in the former statements are accentuated.

John of Damascus in his *De Fide Orthodoxa*—a system of theology—says, Father, Son, and Spirit are one God or one substance (*ousia*, nature, essence), but not one person (*hypostasis*, *prosopon*). “One nature, one Godhead, one power, one volition, one energy, one principle, one authority, one lordship, one kingdom, made known and worshipped with one worship in three perfect persons, united without mixture and distinct without separation.” Thus as to nature the Word is one with the Father. The three persons, real as they are, are not related as three men to one another. They are one, but different as to their mode of existence. Despite all his efforts to avoid subordinationism, he does not succeed. The Father is viewed as the principle of the Godhead, the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son. Out of this teaching grew the dispute between the east and the west about the *filioque*.

The starting-point of Augustine is the Unity of God. The Trinity does not interfere with this. The one God has one substance, one nature, one operation, one will. “The works of

the Trinity are inseparable." The theophanies of the Old Testament are not to be referred exclusively to the Son. The Son and the Spirit take part in their own mission. The reason why Son and Spirit are sent, and not the Father, is not that they are less than the Father, but that they proceed from him. Father, Son, and Spirit are consequently not three different persons as three men are, who belong to one genus. Here we see an advance beyond the Cappadocians (p. 96). On the contrary, each divine person, as to substance, is identical with the others or with the whole divine substance.

Augustine holds no less firmly the three Persons in the one God. These are not related to God as species to genus or accidents to substance. Rather the inner mutual relation is meant to be expressed by the term person. "The one God is never either only Father or only Son; but Father, Son, and Spirit are the three existence-forms of the one God, each implying the other. They are accordingly identical in substance, nay the relation of dependence between them is reciprocal" (Seeberg). The difference is that the whole undivided Godhead belongs to each one under a different point of view, as begetting, begotten, and breathed. Yet Augustine is not altogether satisfied either

with the terms or their explanation. "When it is asked: What are the three? human speech labours under great poverty. But three persons are spoken of, not that the mystery may be uttered, but that we may not be altogether silent." That on this view the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but from both, is self-evident.<sup>1</sup>

Augustine uses illustrations drawn from the constitution of human nature. In perception we have the object, the vision, the intention uniting the two; in thought we have memory, internal vision and will uniting the two; in the human spirit we have mind, self-conscious knowledge and love which loves itself and its knowledge; in love we have the lover, what is loved and love. He brings other analogies from outward nature. The Trinity does not in Augustine, as it did in the Cappadocians, obscure the one personal God. He concludes with a prayer: "O Lord, our God, we believe in thee the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit. For the Truth would not have said: Go ye and baptize, etc., unless thou wert a Trinity. . . . May I remember thee, understand

<sup>1</sup> The work of Hilary of Poitiers († 366) on the Trinity is scarcely less important than that of Augustine. Hilary was greatly influenced by Origen, and was sometimes called "the Athanasius of the West."

thee, love thee . . . O Lord, one God, God the Trinity, whatever I have said in these books that is thine let they who are thine also acknowledge; if there is anything that is mine, do thou and they who are thine forgive."

The so-called Athanasian Creed represents Augustine's teaching. The treatise *De Trinitate* has sentences and phrases similar to some in the Creed. The formula seems to have arisen in Southern Gaul in the second quarter of the fifth century, in the circle of John Cassian or Vincentius of Lerins. The second part is not much later than the first. The Creed is thus not the work of a Council, like the Nicene, but passed of itself into use in the Frankish and then in the entire western Church.

## VIII

### CONTROVERSIES RESPECTING CHRIST'S PERSON TILL CHALCEDON (451) AND THE END OF THE GREEK PERIOD

THE result of the discussions of the last period was that faith in the Godhead and the humanity of Christ was firmly assured; but nothing was said about the mutual relations of the two in the one person. This was the problem which occupied thought during the next half-century. Tertullian had thrown out hints in respect to the one person in two substances, but the question had not been seriously considered. The task seems sufficiently daring, perhaps presumptuous; and in the end no positive decision was arrived at. All that was done was to reject the solutions proposed as inconsistent with faith in a real incarnation. But at least error was rejected. The questions were raised by individual teachers, and had perforce to be considered. It should also be borne in mind



that the teachers whose doctrine was condemned as unscriptural all held the doctrine of the incarnation as settled in the previous period. Their errors bore on the further question as to the constitution of the incarnate person.

1. The first to attempt a solution was APOLLINARIS, bishop of Laodicea (c. 310–390). He started from two fixed principles—first the Godhead and manhood of Christ, secondly the immutableness of the Godhead in opposition to the Arian notion of its mutableness. How then are these to combine into one personality? “Two perfect natures,” he said, “cannot become one.” Although the divine is immutable, the human is not. Take away then spirit or *nous* and put in its place the divine Logos itself, which is of the same rational nature as spirit or *nous*, and unity of person is secured. We see that he accepts the triple analysis of human nature in 1 Thess. 5<sup>23</sup>. If we speak of body and soul only, he would put the Logos in place of the soul. He deprives the human of the power of will, in order to make sin impossible. “It is impossible,” he said, “for two reasons and wills to dwell together in the same being, lest one should conflict with the other through its own will and energy; therefore the Logos did not assume a human soul but only the flesh. ‘The

Word became flesh'; it is not added 'and soul.'” The alternative was two persons. Apollinaris could speak both of one nature in Christ, because the Logos is inseparable from his flesh, and of two natures, as man has two natures. He also protested against any confusion of the two. He was orthodox enough in intention. He wished to preserve both sides of the incarnation along with one person. He said: “The same Christ is both God and man. If Christ had been man only, he could not have saved the world; if God only, he could not have saved by suffering.” He also held in some sense a pre-existence of Christ's flesh, appealing to John 3<sup>13</sup>, 1 Cor. 15<sup>47</sup>.

It is obvious that the solution of Apollinaris had no chance of acceptance, inasmuch as it deprived Christ's humanity of the chief human faculty,—the power of will and reason. The orthodox argued that if the soul or spirit were left out of Christ's person, man's spirit would have no part in redemption. The doctrine was condemned at synods at Alexandria in 362, at Rome 377, Antioch 379, Constantinople 381. The synod at Rome said, “If the whole of man had perished, it was necessary that what had perished should be saved.” Gregory Nazianzen insisted on the same thought.<sup>1</sup> “Was made

<sup>1</sup> “If anyone has trusted in a man without reason, he is truly

man" in the Nicene Creed was evidently directed against Apollinarianism. Yet it has been pointed out that the doctrine of the impersonality of the human nature, according to which the personality is in the Logos, as held by orthodox teachers, has at least the appearance of infringing the integrity of the human nature, though not of course intended to do so.

2. The heresy of NESTORIUS († 440) was not definitely advanced as in the former case, but arose incidentally in a dispute over the use of the term *Theotokos* (mother of God). Nestorius had been bishop of Antioch before he was called to Constantinople in 429, and was imbued with the spirit of the Antiochian school. That school was the antithesis of the Alexandrian, making the grammatical teaching of Scripture its first study. The proper founder of the school was Diodorus, presbyter of Antioch (then bishop of Tarsus, † 394); followed by his disciple Theodore of Mopsuestia († 428), Chrysostom († 407), Nestorius, Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus († 457), Ibas, bishop of Edessa († 457). The school

without reason and not worthy of salvation; for what he did not assume he did not heal, but what is united to God is saved. If Adam half fell, then half may be assumed and saved; but if all fell, it must be united to the whole nature of him that was begotten and all saved" (Gregory Nazianzen).

was at the farthest remove from Alexandrian speculation and allegory. Its Scriptural principle and rational spirit naturally led it to lay stress on the complete humanity of Christ, an uncommon course in those days. Alexandria with the west went to an extreme in emphasising the divine element, often falling into the docetism condemned in St. John's epistle.

Nestorius objected to the application, according to the common practice, to the Virgin Mary of the term *Theotokos* (mother of God), and would substitute *Christotokos* (mother of Christ). As free will was an essential part of human nature—essential to human development—and any mingling of the human and the divine would abolish free will, the only union possible between the two was one of moral relation (not a natural one), by indwelling or moral union. The Word united with himself a perfect man. The nature and personality, the Antiochians said, were inseparable. The union was not a personal one. "We," they said, "adore the temple because of the inhabitant, the form of a servant because of the form of God." The unity of person was sacrificed to the reality and distinction of the two natures. What Cyril of Alexandria and other opponents urged was that this doctrine made two separate persons of Christ without real

union. They said in substance, "In this case we are redeemed by the sufferings of a mere man, a man is to us the Way and Truth and Life, we worship a God-inhabited man, we are baptized into a man, in the Supper we partake of the flesh and blood of a man." Nestorius and Cyril hurled anathemas at each other,<sup>1</sup> and both tried to get the approval of bishop Cœlestine of Rome. Cœlestine sided strongly with Cyril, Rome and Alexandria again acting together. The Antiochians in turn accused Cyril of Apollinarianism.

A General Council was called at Ephesus (431). Cœlestine was represented by three legates, who were instructed to act with Cyril. Despite the protests of Nestorius, of a number of bishops and the imperial delegate, Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus opened the Council before the arrival of John of Antioch and others. Nestorius was quickly condemned and deposed. When John of Antioch arrived, he held another Council, which deposed Cyril and Memnon for their illegal conduct, and said nothing about

<sup>1</sup> Mary, Nestorius said, was not the mother of God the Word, but of Immanuel. Christ is one by conjunction, not by nature. The flesh is not capable of the divine. The same nature is not to be called God and man. "I divide the natures but conjoin the reverence." "I worship, so to speak, the animated purple of the King."

Nestorius. Then the Roman legates interfered, summoned John, and when he did not appear, passed sentence of deposition. The whole affair was described at the time both as a comedy and tragedy. At first the emperor agreed with the acts of both parties, but at last took the part of the Alexandrians. Nestorius retired into a cloister. The final issue was that the Antiochians had to abandon Nestorius and acknowledge the action of Cyril. The theological use of *Theotokos* simply meant to affirm that he who was born of Mary was God as well as man.

Whatever our opinion about Cyril's course of action and the details of his teaching, we can scarcely doubt that in the main his doctrinal contention was right. History has endorsed his action. Dr. Loofs acknowledges that, however unintentionally, the Nestorian position was similar to that of Paul of Samosata. It starts with the pre-existent Son of God and the Son of man, and never brings them to unity. "The more easily the completeness of the human nature of Christ was preserved, the more difficult it was to maintain (as the Logos was not conceived as impersonal, as in Paul of Samosata) the unity of his person" (Loofs, p. 148). There has always been in the Church much Nestorianism, latent or avowed. This is the danger of unduly em-



phasising Christ's humanity as Docetism is the danger of emphasising his deity.

3. We may mention here, anticipating somewhat, the doctrine of EUTYCHES (an archimandrite of Constantinople), which was at the opposite extreme to that of Nestorius. He held only one nature after the incarnation, the divine. "I confess our Lord to have been begotten of two natures before the union, but after the union I confess one nature." In this view he simply isolates one side of Cyril's doctrine, as we shall see. He was condemned and deposed at a synod in Constantinople (488 A.D.). Both Eutyches and bishop Flavian of Constantinople appealed to bishop Leo of Rome, in order to gain his support.

4. The Antiochian school takes a similar line to Nestorius. The distinctness and completeness of the two natures are strongly asserted, but the unity of person is only nominal. THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA speaks of Christ as "perfect man, his nature consisting of a rational soul and human flesh." There are two perfect persons as well as natures: "When we attempt to distinguish the natures, we say that the person of the man is perfect, and that of the Godhead also is perfect." A *becoming* man can only be spoken of in appearance (docetically); "for when he says 'he took' (Phil. 2<sup>7</sup>), he speaks according to



truth; but when he says 'became' (John 1<sup>14</sup>), according to appearance; for he was not transformed into flesh." In this case we can only say that the Son of God dwells in the Son of David, as God in a temple or in the Old Testament prophets, or even in believing Christians, only in unique fashion. The union therefore is not natural but moral, not in essence but goodwill. The man Jesus wills what God wills; through him the Godhead works; there is one willing and one operation. This union is indissoluble, and was perfected by the exaltation of Jesus. On account of this union we may speak of one person. "The natures are distinguished, but there is one person brought about by the union." The illustration of man and wife as one flesh is used. Here we seem to be again on the path of Paul of Samosata, Lucian, and Arius. We are told that in the suffering "the deity was separate from him that suffered; yet it was not absent as regards love." In the worship of Jesus the two natures are sharply severed. Mary, the *anthropotokos*, can only be called *Theotokos* in so far as God was in the man born, "not circumscribed in him as to nature, but being in him as to state of will."

5. The three Cappadocians, while keeping the two natures distinct, press the unity of person almost to the point of Eutychianism. Gregory

Nazianzen: "God is both that which assumes and that which is assumed, two natures running into one, not two sons; of which one deified and the other was deified. O new commingling! O strange conjunction!" Again: "For God and man are two natures, as also soul and body are; but there are not two Sons or two Gods . . . And (if I am to speak concisely) the Saviour is made of elements which are distinct from one another (for the invisible is not the same with the visible, nor the timeless with that which is subject to time), yet he is not two persons. God forbid!" Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the human in Christ being changed into the divine, the weakness and mortality being consumed by the divine presence as by fire.<sup>1</sup> While the properties of the natures remain distinct, there are not two Christs or two Words. The Cappadocians are swayed by two motives, the picture in the Gospels leading them to keep the natures distinct, the work of redemption leading them to give pre-eminence to the divine.

6. Cyril's doctrine was developed in opposition

<sup>1</sup> "Because of the conjunction and union the properties of both natures become common, the master taking to himself the servant's stripes, and the servant being glorified with the master's honour."

to Nestorius. It sums up and closes the controversy in the east. His starting-point is the Logos, who assumes an animated body and a rational soul as his body and soul. His standing formula is the "one incarnate nature of the Divine Word." Two perfect natures, divine and human, must be supposed. Christ is *homoousios* (consubstantial) both with man and with God. The Logos is the personal element, the human nature is impersonal. In consequence of the incarnation a union takes place. This must not be conceived as a conversion or change, because the nature of the Word is unchangeable, nor yet as a mingling, nor again as an indwelling or conjunction. The two natures retain their distinctiveness. He compares the union to the emperor who may appear also as consul and to the union of body and soul. Thus while in the abstract the natures are distinguished, in the concrete we have "one incarnate nature," of which the Logos is the subject. On the other hand, we must confess one Son, one Lord, one Christ. "Of two different natures is the one and only Christ." He is one and the same before and after the incarnation. "For he who was the Son from God the Father in nature, taking to himself a body with soul and reason, was born in the flesh . . . and this without being changed into

flesh, rather assuming it and not regardless of the divine." Outwardly he was a man, inwardly God. The Son is not divided, but unites in himself the properties of both natures. The sayings of the Gospels, referring to the divinity and humanity, must not be assigned to two persons, "for the one and only Christ is not two-fold, although composed of two different elements." The person being one, all properties can be affirmed of the one Christ. The Logos is visible and tangible, the suffering is God's suffering; hunger and thirst, learning and praying belong to him; whilst, on the other hand, Christ's body was a divine body; the Son of man comes from and returns to heaven, is worshipped, etc. The term *Theotokos* is justified. Yet again it is said that the Word remains outside suffering, "considered as God." Suffering can no more touch him than blows can touch the fire in heated iron. It is not easy to reconcile these statements. Cyril's doctrine of Christ was ruled by regard for his saving work. Because the Word assumes the whole of human nature, the latter is made partaker of God and immortality. The thought of a Mediator between God and man, of redemption by his blood, of his example, is dwelt on. Dr. Loofs says that while Cyril's Christology differs somewhat from that of Athanasius

and the Cappadocians it is "essentially the same."<sup>1</sup>

7. The western Fathers contented themselves with maintaining the essentials of the doctrine without involving themselves in detailed discussion. HILARY, in his great work *De Trinitate* (p. 103 note), affirms: "The Word is perfect God, Christ is perfect man," and affirms the unity of the two, neither believing in any other Christ than Jesus, nor preaching any other Jesus than Christ. In him are found both the nature of man and the nature of God. "Remaining in the form of God, he assumed the form of a servant, undergoing no change, but emptying himself and hiding within

<sup>1</sup> "For as the Word was God before his sojourn (on earth), so also having become man he is one again. For on this account (the apostle) called him a mediator between God and man, as being one out of two natures." "We are accustomed always to keep the union inviolate, believing the same one to be only-begotten and first-born; only-begotten as the Word from God the Father, the first-born again as born man." "Know that the mind contemplates a certain difference of natures; but the Word is not divided, but combines both into one, and blends the properties of the natures together as we do by a myriad words." "Conferring on his own flesh the glory of the divine power, while on the other hand appropriating the things of the flesh, both by a sort of economical union and adding them to his own nature." We see that Cyril dwelt exclusively on the unity of Christ's person in opposition to Nestorius, and so was near falling into Eutychianism.

himself and made empty within his own power, he humbles himself to the form of human appearance." "Emptying of form is not abolition of nature." The Godhead did not and could not feel suffering.—Ambrose († 397) follows in the track of Tertullian. "The one Son of God speaks in both natures." "Twofold substance . . . both of the divinity and the flesh." The distinctness of the natures is sharply held, the unchangeableness of the Godhead as well as the completeness of the humanity. He also speaks of an emptying and concealing of the Godhead.

Augustine's position is similar. In Christ two complete natures or substances constitute one person. "Christ is one person of a twofold substance, because both God and man." "Equal to the Father as to divinity, but less than the Father as man." The union in the "homo-deus" is of another kind than in the saints in whom the Word does not become flesh. "It is clear that by a certain strange assumption of that man one person with the Word is effected." Augustine also calls the union a "mingling," like that of body and soul in man: "Thus in the one case (man) there is a mingling of soul and body, in the other there is a mingling of God and man." "The same God who is man and the same man who is God, not by con-



fusion of nature but by unity of person." There is no thought of conversion or kenosis of the Godhead. The Godhead remains what it was, only the flesh is added to it. All this is practically applied to Christ as our Mediator and example. Both natures are required for his work.

8. Cyril's successor at Alexandria, DIOSCURUS, carried still further the "one nature" doctrine. He got the emperor to call a General Council at Ephesus in 449, at which by violence he carried everything to the cry, "Anathema to everyone who speaks of two natures after the incarnation." The letter of bishop Leo of Rome to the Council was not read. Eutyches was restored, and his opponents were deposed. The Council was afterwards set aside, and is known as the "Robber Council." This result was due to the action of Leo of Rome, who waited his time, and, after the death of Theodosius in 450, got his successor Marcian to summon another Council at Chalcedon in 451. Here all was reversed; Dioscurus was deposed. About six hundred bishops, all Greek, took part in the Council. The proceedings were scarcely less violent than at the "Robber Council." Leo's letter was approved and used, although not formally adopted. The decisions of Nicæa and Constantinople (381 A.D.) were affirmed. Leo's much-praised letter merely



recapitulates the teaching of the western writers before mentioned, without touching on the questions raised in the east. The formula agreed on runs : " We confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ . . . perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood . . . consisting of rational soul and body, of one substance with the Father as to the Godhead and of one substance with us as to the manhood. One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, and Only-begotten, made known in two natures unconfusedly, inconvertibly, indivisibly, inseparably ; the difference of the natures not destroyed by the union, rather the property of each nature preserved and uniting into one person and one hypostasis, not divided or sundered into two persons." These definitions agree with Leo's letter, which was thus substantially imposed on the east. Not merely Dioscurus and Eutyches, but Cyril was in fact partially repudiated. The breach between east and west begins from this time.

9. The long controversy was partly continued in the perplexing disputes about Monophysitism (one nature) and Monothelitism (one will). The Chalcedon formula, as largely of western origin, was by no means welcome to the east.<sup>1</sup> Cyril's

<sup>1</sup> It seems strange in this case that the formula was adopted by the large gathering at Chalcedon.

position was still held by great numbers there. The mixing up of imperial politics with church disputes was more pronounced and confusing than ever. The aim of the politicians was, of course, to frame a compromise that would satisfy adherents of Cyril and adherents of the Chalcedon creed. They failed to do this, despite many attempts. The result eventually was the formation of two Monophysite sects—Severians and Julianists, followers of Severus of Antioch and Julian of Halicarnassus. The former held to Cyril's dictum: "One Christ from two natures." He acknowledged two natures after as before the union, but made the distinction an abstract one, as Cyril did. He thought the Chalcedon form Nestorian in tendency. One inference from his doctrine was that Christ's body was corruptible, and that Christ's human soul was not omniscient (*Agnoetæ*). Julian held that Christ assumed our flesh to release it from corruption as well as sin. Christ's body was glorified from the first. The capacity of suffering therefore was due to Christ's will. Others of the sect thought Christ's body was uncreated (*Aktistæ*). The sect was perpetuated in the Syrian Jacobites, in the Coptic, Abyssinian, and Armenian churches.

At the 5th General Council in Constantinople (553 A.D.), at which about a hundred and fifty

bishops were present, the "Three Chapters" were condemned.<sup>1</sup> Pope Vigilius was present and objected to the condemnation of dead Christians, but he was swept aside, and he afterwards agreed. The Council of Chalcedon was acknowledged; Origen was condemned as heretical.

The Monothelite dispute arose out of the effort to win over the Monophysites. The patriarch Sergius of Constantinople suggested to the emperor Heraclius (610–641) to propose to them the phrase, Christ does divine and human works "by one theandric energy," involving one will only in Christ. Sergius wrote in this sense to Honorius of Rome, who assented, arguing that one will follows from the incarnation. But John IV. and Theodore I., successors of Honorius, condemned the view. The monk Maximus, Pope Martin I., defended the two wills as a consequence of the Chalcedon creed. The latter held a great synod at Rome in 649 (105 bishops), which added to the Chalcedon form the words: "Two natural wills, divine and human, and two natural operations." In 680 the 6th General Council<sup>2</sup> was held at Con-

<sup>1</sup> This was a condemnation of the three heads of the Antiochian school—Theodore of Mopsuestia, Ibas, and Theodoret.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack calls it "a Council of antiquarians and palæographers."

stantinople (about 170 bishops), which endorsed the doctrine of two wills, and anathematised Pope Honorius and the Patriarch of Constantinople. The letter of Pope Agatho had great influence with the Council. The two natures involved two wills, the human ever following the divine. Monothelitism was a return to Eutychianism. There were protests from some members of the Council. The Maronites of Lebanon continued the error.

Dr. Seeberg remarks that the story of the last three centuries is the story of the attempt to answer the question of Apollinaris, *i.e.* to discover a theory of the incarnation that would reconcile the distinction of natures with the unity of person. Really the question has never been answered. At the most we have oscillation between opposite extremes. "The history of the last two and a half centuries is the history of the Chalcedon formula." These are the two great figures that emerge: the Chalcedon creed and Cyril. "The latter says that the one Logos-personality has one nature and one divine will; the former that the two natures have one person and two wills. And the latter finally conquered. But it would not have conquered unless, often unconsciously, Cyril's thoughts had illumined its dogmatic system." "Not

a complete result, but a problem, has this Christology given to the Church: that God himself lived and walked among us, a man like us."

10. JOHN OF DAMASCUS († after 794) is an interesting figure, the last theologian of the old and the first of the new dispensation. His *Exposition of the Faith* is in a sense the first systematic treatment of theology. Of its four books the first treats of God, the second of the World, Man, etc., the third of Christ, the fourth of Redemption, Baptism, the Cross, the Mysteries, Saint-worship, etc. Himself no creative genius, he mainly tabulates and methodises the teachings of the Fathers. He is often called the Last of the Fathers. His statement of the Trinity emphasises the unity of the Godhead (see p. 101). In Christology John of Damascus closely follows Chalcedon: one person in two natures. There is no composite nature, no acceptance of one will. In Cyril's formula (one incarnate nature of God the Word) "incarnate" denotes the nature of the flesh. The unity of the two natures is given in the one person. The flesh of Christ has no person but that of the Word, "but on the contrary subsisting in it is personalised." The Logos-person consequently became the person of the formerly impersonal

flesh. "The Logos himself became a person to the flesh." The idea of person here not answering exactly to our idea of personality, but denoting merely the individual existence, John of Damascus speaks of a "composite person" of Christ. Since Christ is God and man, the divine-human person belongs to him. "The person (subsistence) of God the Word before the incarnation was simple and uncompound, and incorporeal and uncreated, but being incarnated it became both the person of the flesh and compounded of the Godhead, which it always had, and the flesh which it assumed, and manifested in two natures, bears the properties of the two natures, so that the same one person is both uncreated in the Godhead and created in the manhood, visible and invisible." The mutual communication and penetration of the natures is then dwelt on. This interpenetration proceeds only from the divine nature; the human will of Christ is deified, so that he freely wills what the divine will in him wills; even his humanity is omniscient; Christ has no separate choice; Luke 2<sup>52</sup> merely points to the revelation of the wisdom dwelling in Christ, or to Christ making human growth his own; the prayers Matt. 26<sup>39</sup>, 27<sup>46</sup> are merely meant to teach us or represent us. "The Word appropriates to himself the attributes of



humanity ; for all that pertains to his holy flesh is his, and he imparts to the flesh his own attributes by way of communication." "Hence it is that the Lord of glory is said to have been crucified, although his divine nature never endured the cross, and that the Son of Man is allowed to have been in heaven before the passion, as the Lord himself said, John 3<sup>13</sup>." The divine nature has no direct relation to suffering. The hypostatic unity justifies the worship of Christ's flesh and the title *theotokos*, "because this name presents the whole mystery of the incarnation." "The Chalcedon creed conquers, but Apollinaris is not conquered" (Seeberg).

With the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation dogmatic development in the eastern church came to an end. Still alongside dogma there is in the east, as elsewhere, a working theology which exhibits still better the mind of the church. Throughout the history we miss any deep apprehension of the guilt of sin, such as weighed on the thought of the west.<sup>1</sup> The sense of the miserable, deadly effects of sin in separation from God, the dominion of the devil over man, the curse of mortality, the bondage of spirit to sense, was vivid enough. Man's bond-

<sup>1</sup> See Scott, *Nicene Theology*, pp. 214 ff.



age to the devil and the devil's right to man seem to have taken firm hold of the eastern mind. This again explains the acceptance of the idea of Christ's death as a ransom to buy off Satan's rights, although others represent Satan as deceived or out-manœuvred (Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril, Jerome). What he received as ransom he was unable to retain. Gregory Nazianzen denounced the entire notion as an "outrage," and it was also rejected by John of Damascus. There is no sign of belief in original sin. The fact of universal sin since Adam is recognised, but it is accepted as a natural fact needing no explanation. "For through him (Adam) death reigned over every soul and through his disobedience effaced all likeness of Adam, so that men were turned and came to the worship of demons."<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom († 407) observes on Rom. 5<sup>19</sup> that it is incredible that we become sinners through Adam's sin; but we become mortal through Adam sinning and becoming mortal. Sin only weakens man's moral nature; the power of moral choice remains. "It is not to be believed that man is utterly dead and unable to do good. Even the infant, though unable to do everything for itself, can cry and weep, and the mother comes to its help. This is what

<sup>1</sup> Macarius the Egyptian, † c. 391.

the loving God does for the soul coming to and longing for him.”<sup>1</sup>

The view taken of sin powerfully influences the view taken of redemption. Salvation is indeed always regarded as depending on Christ's death, and the death is represented as a sacrifice and ransom for man. But the idea of sacrifice is never explained. Beside the theory just referred to, the chief emphasis is laid on the gift of immortality as doing away the mortality which is the effect of sin. The very union of Christ with humanity is supposed to make humanity divine and immortal. He is the Head, we are the members; and what the Head is the members become. The human race is compared to the bodily organism. One side of St. John's teaching is thus recognised. The Pauline view of justification being lost, the sacrificial aspect of Christ's death becomes unintelligible. This defect marks the teaching of all the Greek Fathers—Cyril, Athanasius, Methodius, Irenæus, Ignatius. “Since he bestowed on us his own image and his own spirit, and we did not keep them safe, he took himself a share in our poor, weak nature, that he might cleanse us and make us incorruptible, and constitute us again partakers of his divinity” (John of Damascus).

<sup>1</sup> Macarius.

"Every action then and miracle-working of Christ is great and divine and wonderful; but the most wonderful of all is his precious cross. For by nothing else is death abolished, the sin of our first parent done away, Hades spoiled, the resurrection bestowed, power to despise present things and death itself given to us, the way to the old blessedness restored, the gates of paradise opened, our nature seated at God's right hand, we made children and heirs of God, except through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*ibid.*).

Baptism and the eucharist are the two primary means of salvation. Baptism brings forgiveness and the new birth. It wipes out sin "as with a sponge," gives the new life in Christ and immortality. Forgiveness is mainly thought of as purifying. Not that the cleansing is perfect; it is begun and has to grow. It gives power to overcome in the conflict with sin lying in the future. Basil calls baptism "a ransom for captives, a remission of debts, the death of sin, the soul's new birth, a garment of light, an irrefragable seal, a chariot to heaven, messenger of the kingdom, gift of adoption."

The eucharist especially was invested with awful mystery. The language of the Greek Fathers constantly fluctuates between the

symbolical and realistic meaning. Basil says: "He (Christ) called his whole mystical sojourn (on earth) flesh and blood, and set forth the teaching, consisting of practical, physical, and theological knowledge, by which the soul is nourished and prepared meanwhile for the contemplation of actual realities." Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386 A.D.) compares the change in the elements to the miracle at Cana; the bread becomes the body, the wine the blood of Christ. Yet elsewhere he speaks of the body and blood being given "in a figure." Christ's body makes ours immortal. We should not be led astray by the sense of taste. Gregory of Nyssa also says that "the bread, sanctified by the word of God, is changed into the body of the divine Word." The end is that "by union with that which is immortal man may also be made partaker of immortality." Then in Cyril of Jerusalem and Chrysostom this sacramental body of Christ is identified with the earthly body of the Lord. John of Damascus goes still farther. He who formed the body from the Virgin, by the Spirit changes the bread and wine into body and blood. The elements are now not "a figure of body and blood," nor yet a body coming down from heaven, but they are changed. "The body born of the holy Virgin is in truth body united with

divinity, not that the body which was received up into heaven descends, but that the bread itself and the wine are changed into God's body and blood."<sup>1</sup> This, it will be remembered, is in the eighth century.

There was also a rank growth of superstition in the worship of the cross, relics, saints, pictures. Not that instruction in the Scriptures is wanting. Scripture reading is earnestly commended in writers like Chrysostom, Basil, John of Damascus.<sup>2</sup> Macarius says, the Holy Scriptures are the King's letters to us. Monasticism is a ruling element in the life of the Greek Church, along with excessive ceremonial in worship. Dean Stanley says that the Greek Church differs as much from the Roman in this respect as the Roman Church differs from Protestantism. The great conflict about image-worship in the eighth century hastened the decline of the Greek Church. The emperor Leo the Isaurian began the conflict. Pope Gregory II.

<sup>1</sup> "The bread and the wine are not merely figures of the body and blood of Christ (God forbid !), but the deified body of the Lord itself ; for the Lord said, 'This is my body,' not, this is a figure of my body, and 'my blood,' not, a figure of my blood."

<sup>2</sup> John of Damascus says that the cross is worshipped merely as a symbol. "Through the Holy Scriptures we are trained to action pleasing to God and untroubled contemplation."

opposed him both on the merits of the case and as an intruder on sacred ground. John of Damascus elaborately apologises for the practice from the Old Testament precedents of the cherubim, and from the need of giving spiritual instruction through the senses. He draws the distinction between the lower and higher kinds of worship, afterwards known as *dulia* and *latria*. He also defends worship of the Virgin, saints, relics, in the lower sense. "Through bodily vision we come to spiritual vision." "I therefore venerate and hold in reverence and worship the matter by which I obtained salvation. I do not worship it as God, but as filled with divine energy and grace." Images, etc., are not merely "books of the unlearned," but means of grace. Succeeding emperors carried on Leo's work, but the empress Irene took an opposite course, and at the 7th General Council of Nicæa (787) image-worship was sanctioned. This was properly the last Greek dogma, a poor parallel to the first dogma at Nicæa in 325.

The writings of the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite<sup>1</sup> are supposed to have appeared about two centuries earlier than John of Damascus. They are said to have exerted

<sup>1</sup> *The Celestial Hierarchy, Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, Divine Names, Mystical Theology.*



great influence in the Greek Church, and are a singular compound of philosophy, mysticism, and ceremonialism. Their doctrine of God, apart from the Trinity, is pure Neo-Platonism. God is pure being and yet above being and reason. Everything may be both affirmed and denied of him. He is the first cause and final end of all things. All being is good, evil is the privation of being. Man's goal is union with God, which he reaches through purification, illumination, and perfection, dying to self and outward things, and losing himself in the source of all being. Even the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation are transformed. The "holy mysteries" are a training for this consummation. The earthly is symbolic of the heavenly hierarchy. Symbolism is carried to an extreme. Maximus the Confessor (seventh century) continued and developed the teaching.

Then the curtain falls on the eastern church. From this time it ceases to have a history. One of the strangest facts of Church history is the torpor which settled on it after centuries of active thought and work. The Greek Fathers have had no successors. The pride of the Greek Church is that it stands to-day in doctrine and worship where it stood at the 7th General Council (787). "All creative life ceased more



and more in the east from the sixth century, the churches of the east have remained essentially what they were in the sixth and seventh centuries" (Loofs). Many causes, political and ecclesiastical, helped to bring about this state of things; we cannot discuss them here. It was not long before the great Mohammedan wave swept over what remained of Greek civilisation and faith. The symbol of punctilious Greek orthodoxy is its rejection of the "filioque" clause in the Nicene Creed,<sup>1</sup>—not a little strange after the wire-drawn controversies of the early centuries. The Greek Church bears out Harnack's remarks about a "Christianity of the second grade," in which the primitive faith was buried under masses of heathen ideas and customs. The inward degeneracy prepared the way for outward decline, and was due to the influx of heathen populations, which the Church was unable to instruct and shape.

11. What should be our attitude toward the Nicene or Logos theology as a whole?

An influential school in our days repudiates it altogether as a system in which Greek

<sup>1</sup>The double procession was already taught in the fifth century; in 589 King Reccared in Spain accepted the creed with the filioque; thence it passed into Gaul in the eighth century, and in the tenth was received in Rome.

metaphysics has taken the place of Biblical truth.<sup>1</sup>

It is scarcely necessary to say that no evangelical Church is committed to Nicene theology as authoritative. That theology must be tested by Scripture, and accepted only so far as it serves the interests of Biblical truth. It is as little necessary to say that no system of *theology* can be regarded as essential to salvation or to Christianity. It is no duty of ours to defend every iota of the ancient theology. We may, however, point out one or two facts which are often forgotten by some modern writers. First, the extent of the metaphysical element in early theology is often exaggerated. No church whatever is committed to all the details of the controversies we have been considering. We have only to do with the definitions finally accepted. These definitions were arrived at simply on Scriptural grounds. The constant appeal of the Councils is to Scripture. No one can read Athanasius and other Fathers without being impressed with this fact. We may not agree with all their arguments; we may think much of their interpretation mistaken; but their mistakes of this kind do not materially affect their conclusions. They believed that their

<sup>1</sup>This is the position taken in Hatch's Hibbert Lectures.

interpretation of Scripture was the one held in the Church from the beginning, and in the main they were right. To condemn them is to condemn the apostles, and this is frankly acknowledged in our day. No one also can fail to be struck with the practical motives animating men like Athanasius. It was less the greatness of Christ that was in question than the redemption of man. The nature of redemption may have been imperfectly understood, but its reality was the supreme concern. In this respect the early writers were as practical, as little merely theoretical, as any modern writers. Their sole concern was to exclude doctrine which destroyed the very essence of Christianity. That they were not mistaken on this point is now universally admitted. Even if Arianism could be proved to be true, Athanasius was right in holding that it was not apostolic Christianity. The cautious, negative character of the early definitions has often been remarked on. One might think from what is said by some writers that the Greek and Christian conceptions of God and the Logos were identical; but it is far from being so. The contrast is far greater than the resemblance. In the Christian doctrine the Biblical truth is principal, the rest secondary.

The modern writers referred to have hitherto

been occupied in the work of destruction. When they begin to construct, they will need to have recourse to philosophy of some kind, if they are to give a rational statement of their faith. They will not be able to limit their view to the Sermon on the Mount. The only valid reason for rejecting any philosophy is that it is false, not that it is ancient or modern, Greek or English or German. It will probably be found that Plato and Aristotle are not obsolete in substance, if obsolete to some extent in form. There can be little doubt that the real objection in our day, as in Arian and Socinian days, is not to the form of old doctrines, but to their substance. It is not this or that mode of presenting Christianity that is in question, but Christianity itself. The questions raised in early days are questions that were inevitable, and that could not be left undiscussed and unanswered.<sup>1</sup>

What are the possible attitudes to the history of Christ? 1. We may be satisfied with the blessings that come to us through him, and refuse to have any theory about his person. As suggested just now, such an attitude cannot last long. And the more unique and overwhelming the impression he makes on us, the more the

<sup>1</sup> This whole subject is ably reviewed in Scott's *Nicene Theology*, Lect. VI. Also p. 172.

necessity of some explanation of this influence will force itself on us. Besides, we act in this way on no other subject. Everywhere else we combine science with practice and experience.

2. We may adopt the purely humanitarian view of Christ. We are safe in saying that with the world's growing appreciation of Christ, this becomes more difficult every year. We should then have to explain his exceptional influence on the moral life of the world.

3. We may acknowledge Christ to be divine, but identify the human and the divine. And this is a position to which many seem to be converging from different sides. We are then confronted with the difficulties of the pantheist view of the world,—its fatalism, its distrust of sense, its confusion of moral distinctions, the unreality it imputes to the outward world. We shall not find that an easy position.

4. We may affirm a doctrine of divine Incarnation, and so not merely recite facts, but attempt some explanation of the facts. The difficulties on this view are fewer and less formidable than on any of the others. This is what the early Church did in its formal utterances.

## PART II

### ST. AUGUSTINE

*Chief Works on Sin and Grace: Liber de 83 Quæstionibus* (c. 388–396 A.D.), *De Libero Arbitrio* (388–395), *Quæstiones ad Simplicianum* (397), *Confessiones* (400). *From the Pelagian controversy: De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione* (412), *De Spiritu et Littera* (412), *De Natura et Gratia* (415), *De Perfectione Justitiæ Homini* (415), *De Gestis Pelagii* (417), *De Gratia Christi et de Peccato Originali* (418), *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia* (419), *Contra Duas Epistolas Pelagianorum* (420), *Contra Julianum* (421), *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* (427), *De Correptione et Gratia* (427), *De Prædeterminatione Sanctorum* (428), *De Dono Perseverantiæ* (429), *Opus Imperfectum contra Julianum* (430), *Letters*. The Anti-Pelagian treatises are edited and published separately by Dr. Bright (Clarendon Press), and are translated in the series published by Clark, Edinburgh.

[AUGUSTINE was a native of Tagaste in Numidia, born in 354 of a heathen father and a Christian mother, Monnica. His *Confessions* gives the story of his early life — his evil youth, his entanglement for nine years in Manichæan error,

the awakening effect on him of Cicero's *Hortensius*, his mother's incessant prayers for his conversion, the answer of the prayers under the ministry of Ambrose at Milan, his baptism in 387, his mother's death soon after at Ostia. His sins and follies are great enough, but we know of them from his own *Confessions*, that most wonderful story of a soul's inmost life. His genius and goodness we learn in other ways. For thirty-four years he lived a life of self-denial and ceaseless toil, as bishop of Hippo in Numidia. Dean Farrar says, "The Latin Church only celebrates two conversions—those of St. Paul (Jan. 25) and St. Augustine (May 5)." See list of his works in Farrar, *Christian Fathers*, ii. 607.]

The remaining developments of doctrine in this period are connected with one name—that of Augustine (Nov. 13, 354; Aug. 28, 430), the greatest and most influential personality in Church history since the apostolic age. He has influenced modern Protestantism as much by his doctrines of sin, grace, and predestination as he has influenced the Roman Church by his theory of Church authority. Whether his influence has been eventually more for good or evil, may to some extent be a moot point. The whole period of the Middle Ages lay under his spell.



The Athanasian Creed is substantially his work. Mysticism may also appeal to his writings. He seems to have impersonated the spirit of western Christendom, especially its practical, legal spirit.<sup>1</sup> At the same time it would be a mistake to think that he is without speculative elements. The speculative and the practical were wonderfully blended in him, although the latter predominated. His theorisings always had a bearing on Christian faith and life. While it is true that his own experience coloured his teaching, it did not do so

<sup>1</sup> Arnobius (Sicca in Numidia, † 327) very well expresses the practical mind of the west. "Christ bade us abandon and ignore all those things which are remote from our knowledge, and not to let our thoughts run on unfruitful questions, but to turn with the whole mind and soul to the Lord of all. . . . What business of yours is it, he says, to inquire who made man, what is the origin of souls, who devised the causes of evils, whether the sun is larger than the earth or is only a foot broad, whether the moon shines with borrowed light or from her own brightness, things which there is neither profit in knowing nor loss in not knowing? Leave these things to God and allow him to know what is, wherefore or whence, whether it ought to have been or not, whether something always existed or whether it was produced at the first, whether it should be annihilated or preserved, consumed, destroyed, or restored in fresh vigour. It is not for your reason to involve itself in such questions, and to care to no purpose for things so distant. Your interests are in danger, and unless you apply yourselves to the knowledge of the supreme God a fearful death awaits you when freed from the fetters of the body."

unduly, or more than is the case in other intense natures like St. Paul or Luther.

Both on the subject of sin and of church polity the way was prepared for Augustine by Tertullian (p. 47), Irenæus, Cyprian (p. 57), and by his spiritual father, Ambrose of Milan († 397). Ambrose comes very near to a doctrine of original sin. He says: "Adam existed, and we all existed in him. Adam perished and all perished in him. I fell in Adam, was driven out of Paradise in Adam, died in Adam. Before we are born we are polluted by contagion, and before we see the light we suffer loss by birth itself (*originis ipsius excipimus injuriam*); we are conceived in unrighteousness." Is that iniquity the mother's or child's? "See whether both are not meant. Not even conception is free from unrighteousness, since parents are not exempt from the fall." The easterns, as we have seen, emphasised free will, and made less of the moral than the physical effects of sin. Ambrose was greatly influenced by eastern writers, especially the three Cappadocians; and he often insists on man's freedom and responsibility for evil-doing. He also held inward sinfulness more clearly than the easterns, who thought chiefly or exclusively of evil acts.

Ambrose is no stranger to the idea of divine

grace. "He that follows Christ, if asked why he wished to be a Christian, is able to answer: It seemed good to me. In saying this he does not deny that it seemed good to God, for by God man's will is prepared. That God should be honoured by the saint is God's grace." It is Christ who comes to us and in us, and who effects these results. Especially is this done in baptism, the effect of which is the removal of unrighteousness and forgiveness. "I do not glory that I am righteous, but that I am redeemed. I glory not that I am free from sin, but that my sins are remitted."

It would be a mistake to suppose that Augustine's scheme of doctrine grew out of the Pelagian controversy. It was settled before that began. Augustine was an original, creative genius. His study of the epistle to the Romans and his own experience of sin and grace were the chief determining causes. It is certainly remarkable that a system of doctrine in such direct antagonism as Pelagianism should have arisen contemporaneously. The two opposing interpretations of the practical side of Christianity met face to face. Both Augustinianism and Protestantism came out of the epistle to the Romans.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The motives for the special form of the doctrine of grace in Augustine lie not primarily in the mode of his conversion,

Still the Pelagian strife must have given greater precision and compactness to Augustine's views.

although this was not without influence, nor in the Pelagian antithesis, although this helped to shape details, and not in the first instance in the Augustinian idea of the Church. Historically regarded, Augustine gave expression to the religious common sense of the west, and was guided by the thoughts of the Roman epistle. In its main lines his doctrine was complete before the great conflict began" (Seeberg, p. 266; Loofs, p. 191).

# I

## DOCTRINE OF SIN AND GRACE

THERE can be no doubt that a great change took place in Augustine's views. At first he did not go beyond Ambrose in his teaching respecting sin. He expressly left power in man to accept or reject God's grace. He himself informs us of his change of view: "By which testimony principally (1 Cor. 4<sup>7</sup>) I myself also was convinced when I held similar error, thinking that the faith by which we believe in God is not God's gift, but from ourselves . . . for neither did I think that faith was preceded by God's grace . . . except that we could not believe if the preaching of the truth did not come first." The causes of the great change in his views on the subject were, not anything arising out of the Pelagian dispute, but partly renewed study of the Roman epistle (chs. 7 and 9) and similar passages, and partly his general theological and philosophical position. The case of Jacob in

Rom. 9 (also Phil. 2<sup>13</sup>) he applies to the work of salvation and mankind generally. He argues that neither works nor the foresight of any merits of faith can have been the ground of Jacob's election. Salvation begins in faith, and faith is entirely an effect of grace or gift of God. "It is manifest that we will in vain unless God shows mercy; but it should be said (I know not how), that God in vain shows mercy unless we will. For if God shows mercy, we also will; to the same mercy it belongs that we will." It must be remembered that to the last Augustine continues to assert that man perishes by his own fault and that he chooses his fate, and also that God is not the author of man's sin and ruin; but in presence of his entire scheme these statements will always seem to many merely verbal protests. He says, "God *justly* complains of sinners as of those whom he does not compel to sin,—and *mercifully*."

Another factor that probably explains to some extent his final position is the Neo-Platonist element in his idea of God. This was far from the only element, but it was one. God is thought of as pure being, simple and immutable. This absolute substance is good, and all that exists is either that substance or from it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We are reminded here of Spinoza's doctrine.

"Every substance is either God or from God, because all good is either God or from God."

"The evil whose source I was seeking is not substance, because if it were substance it would be good" (*Conf.* 7, 12). Evil is non-being, the privation of good, of which we do not need to seek a cause. Its origin is in free will. "I sought what unrighteousness is, and I found no substance but perversity of *will* diverted from the supreme substance, God, to what is lowest." "Evil springs from evil will." It seems to follow that good can only begin by a new creative act of God, bringing being out of non-being. Man can contribute nothing. Thus philosophy is made auxiliary to the doctrine of absolute predestinating grace. It is one of the many inconsequences of Augustine's teaching that he attributes such tremendous significance to sin and then makes it negative in nature.

What impresses us in Augustine's theory is the immense importance attached to Adam's sin. By that one act the fate of the entire race was irrevocably decided.<sup>1</sup> It was only in Adam and in his act of sin that moral freedom ever existed as regards the unregenerate. Since then men

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine rests ultimately on Plato's theory of realism and general ideas, involving the identity of Adam and the race ; see Fisher, *ibid.* p. 185.



have been under a law of bondage and impotence for all good. When men are spoken of as free and sinning and perishing by their own fault, this can only mean on Augustine's system that they were free and sinned and fell in Adam. They have never been free before regeneration to any extent since. At least men are only free to sin.<sup>1</sup> More surprising is the fact that we find no reference to any counteracting effect of redemption. It is in the light of these considerations that the following statements must be understood.

Man was originally made good and free, able to stand, yet free to fall. Sin was possible, not necessary. But man sinned and fell. "The sin was far greater than we can estimate." "How great the guilt of sin when it was so easy not to sin!" "Man's first ruin was love of self." Self-love, ignorance, evil concupiscence are the essence of sin. Not merely did Adam commit an act of sin, he became a sinner, and in him the whole race fell. "Nature was corrupted by sin; our nature was then changed for the worse, not

<sup>1</sup> "We do not say that by Adam's sin free will perished from man's nature; it was able to sin . . . but not able to live well and piously, unless man's will itself had been set free by God's grace." Augustine holds that free will does not necessarily include power to the contrary; see Shedd, ii. 63 ff.

only made sinful, but a generator of sinners; and yet the disease by which the power of living well is lost is not nature but vice." Much is made of concupiscence as the means by which sin is transmitted to posterity. We might suppose from this that even the perpetuation of the race is itself necessarily sinful. But Augustine holds, as in everything else, that although it has become evil it was not originally so.<sup>1</sup> All men were in Adam. "All men were that one man; then in Adam all sinned" (Rom. 5<sup>12</sup>, ἐφ' ᾧ, wrongly rendered *in quo*). All men are a "mass of sin and perdition." None are excepted, not even new-born children. The following quotations may further illustrate these points. "God made man upright, and therefore with a good will." God also gave him help "without which he could not retain that good will, if he willed; but that he should will he left in his power." By means of this aid "the first man was able not to sin, not to die, not to forsake good. . . . Therefore the first liberty of will was the power not to sin . . . the first immortality was the power not to die . . . the first power of perseverance

<sup>1</sup> Harnack understands this to be a relic of Augustine's early Manichæanism. But others (Loofs, Seeberg) differ, explaining as above. The latter see here the effect of Augustine's monkish spirit.

was the power not to forsake good." "If he had willed by the same free will to remain in that upright state, he would without experiencing death and misery have received the fulness of bliss, by which even the holy angels are blessed, who when others fell through free will by the same free will stood and received the reward due to them." The soul died first, for "the death of the soul is when God forsakes it, as the body dies when the soul forsakes it." The soul, so stripped of the aid of grace, lost its power over its former servant, the body. Then concupiscence arose. This includes a turning away from immutable good to the inferior, mutable, and uncertain, but especially lust. All Adam's posterity, "even if by their age they have no sin of their own, contract original sin." "That which in children is called original sin, since as yet they exercise no free will, is not absurdly called voluntary, because being derived from that first evil will of man it is made in some way hereditary." We read also of the perdition even of children through original sin, although the "mildest of all." "The corruption of the body which oppresses the soul is not the cause but the punishment of the first sin; nor did the corruptible flesh make the soul sin, but the soul by its sin made the flesh corruptible,"—a flat contra-

diction of Manichæanism. Nor in original evil is original good forgotten. "In original evil there are two things: sin and punishment; in original good other two: perpetuation of the race and conformity to God's image. . . . In man a certain spark of reason, in which he is made after God's image, is not quite extinct."

If man is in a condition of absolute helplessness and bondage to evil, salvation can only be a work of divine grace and power. By grace is understood, not simply favour, unmerited goodness, but a divine energy transforming man's nature.<sup>1</sup> Grace "precedes the unwilling man that he may will, and follows the willing man lest he will in vain." God "prepares the will, and by co-operating (*co-operando*) perfects what he begins by operating (*operando*); since he himself both operates at first that we may will, and co-operates with the willing that he may perfect the work." Grace is conceived as a divine creative act (p. 147). It not merely gives man true revelations, but produces good volitions in him. "The first gifts of grace are forgiveness in baptism and faith, which is defined as assent to truth, and is only effectual as it issues in knowledge and love." "He believes in Christ who both hopes in Christ and loves Christ; for if he

<sup>1</sup> Loofs, p. 197.

has faith without hope and love, he believes that Christ exists, but does not believe upon Christ. He who believes upon Christ is made a member of his body, which cannot be done unless hope and love are added . . . Therefore faith in Christ is the faith which works by love." "Faith, spirit, and grace are convertible ideas, for faith is the faith which works by love, the spirit is the spirit of love, and the grace of the New Testament is love."

Much of this teaching is obviously quite Scriptural. The great defect is the almost entire absence of justification and faith in the Pauline sense as the Reformation understands Paul. Justification is being made righteous by the infusion of love (Rom. 5<sup>5</sup>), the imparting of a good will. What can this mean but a new moral creation? "What else is it to be justified than to be made just by him who justifies the ungodly, so that from being ungodly he becomes just?" "By the gift of the Spirit we work righteousness." "Spiritually he heals the sick, or gives life to the dead, *i.e.* justifies the ungodly." This infusion of a good will is continuous and growing. "We are justified, but righteousness itself grows as we advance." Forgiveness is only a very subordinate part of justification. "Nor is that grace only remission of sins . . .

but it is the cause of the law being fulfilled, the nature being set free." "For in both ways grace assists, both by remitting what we did amiss and by giving help, so that we forsake evil and do good." "The Holy Ghost inspires good instead of evil concupiscence, that is sheds abroad love in our hearts, by which the mind gains delight in and love of that supreme and immutable good, which is God." It is in this sense that Augustine teaches justification by faith, the meaning of both terms differing from our interpretation of Paul. Occasionally justify occurs in the sense of absolve, but the cases are few (Loofs, p. 197). "Wherefore the meanings of the two apostles, Paul and James, are not contradictory, when one says that man is justified by faith without works, and the other says that faith without works is vain; because the former speaks of works which precede faith, the latter of those which follow faith." "In the law of works God says: Do what I command; in the law of faith it is said: Give what thou commandest." "Thus it is necessary for man that he should not only be justified, *i.e.* be made just from being ungodly . . . but also when he is justified by faith grace should walk with him, and he should lean upon it lest he fall." In this respect, as we have seen, Augustine is not alone.

It is not easy to find Paul's doctrine of justification anywhere in the early days of the Church ; and the fundamental error passed on to the Middle Ages and the Council of Trent. The Reformation went back to Paul. Some modern Protestant writers are inclined to ignore the distinction between justification and sanctification.



## II

### PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION

THE doctrine of predestination and election followed logically from the account given of the nature and effects of sin. There is no possibility of co-operation, to say nothing of initiative, in man before regeneration. The sole reason then why some repent and are saved, while others do not, must lie in God, who has decided the matter in his eternal purpose. "The predestination of God which is in the good man is the preparation for grace, but grace is the effect of predestination itself." The number of the saved is fixed. "The number is certain, so that none can either be added to them nor subtracted from them." Predestination is the cause of salvation; all means of grace merely carry this out, and so only avail for the predestinated. The "real calling of the elect" applies only to the "elect man, that he may follow him that calls"; the elect man only has

the gift of perseverance, whereas the foreknown may fall away at last. "Whoever therefore in God's providential arrangement are foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified,—I do not say those not yet reborn, but those not even born,—are already sons of God, and can never perish" (*Corr. et Grat.* 9, 23). God predestinates "not because we were to be (saints), but that we might be." "Whom he foreknew that he might predestinate, he predestinated that he might call; he called that he might justify; he justified that he might glorify." God calls the elect by an "adequate calling" (*vocatione congrua*), for not all the called are called according to his purpose." The faith then which is the basis of the Christian state is the gift of God. The predestinated one is saved as a rule in connection with the Church, but he may not be so connected. The non-elect cannot be saved. Still the fault is with them. How, is not shown; it is simply asserted. "He who falls falls by his own will, and he who stands stands by God's will" (*Don. Pers.* 8, 19). In some passages Augustine goes so far as to speak of those "predestinated to eternal death" (Seeberg, p. 280). Why some are chosen and others not, there is no explanation. All that can be said is, God so willed. We are here stopped with the warning: "Nevertheless it is good not to affect high things, but to fear."

The grace given to the elect is irresistible. Here Augustine falls back on God's absolute creative power, which no human power can resist. Yet man is not compelled to be saved. God creates good will in him, so that he wills what God wills. The difference between this grace and the grace or help given to Adam is that the latter might be resisted, whereas the former inspires the good will. Augustine denies that this is inconsistent with freedom, since real freedom only exists when the will has been renewed by grace.<sup>1</sup>

Perseverance to the end is also a gift of grace to the elect. Here, too, the rule applies: "God brings about that they will." The gift of perseverance means not merely that without it men cannot be finally saved, but that with it they cannot but be saved.<sup>2</sup>

In this way Augustine maintains his great Pauline principle of God's sovereign grace, to the utter exclusion of human merit. But it is at the cost of an immense strain put on human faith. The doctrine of salvation by grace, not

<sup>1</sup> "There (1 Tim. 2<sup>4</sup>) we may understand 'all men' as every sort of men; and it may be understood in any other way as long as we are not compelled to believe that the omnipotent God willed something to be done and it was not done" (*Enchir.* 103, 27).

<sup>2</sup> The whole subject is sympathetically discussed in Shedd, ii. 50-92.

by works or merit, is amply provided for without such extreme theories. His relentless war against human pride and merit is thoroughly evangelical in spirit, however defective or erroneous the expression. "Even our righteousness, although true on account of the true good which is its goal, is such in this life that it consists rather in remission of sins than in perfection of virtue. A witness to this is the prayer of the whole city of God, 'Forgive us our debts.'" He laid great stress on Christ's humanity. "In so far as he is man he is Mediator; but in so far as he is the Word, he is not Mediator, but equal to God." He appreciates the humility of Christ as Greek theology could not. "We believe that God was made man for us as an example of humility, and to demonstrate God's love toward us. For it is good for us to believe and keep in firm and constant remembrance, that the humility by which God was born of a woman, and was led by mortals to death through such revilings, is the supreme remedy by which the swelling of our pride is to be cured, and the lofty mystery by which the chain of sin is to be unloosed." He also makes much of our redemption from the power of Satan. "That blood, because it was his, who had no sin, was shed for the remission of our sins, in order that, because the devil justly

held those whom on account of their guilt he bound in the condition of death, he might justly release them through him, on whom, innocent of all sin, he unjustly inflicted the penalty of death ; in this redemption the blood of Christ was given as, so to speak, a price for us."

We have spoken of the Neo-Platonist strain in Augustine's conception of God ; its effect is seen in many parts of his teaching.<sup>1</sup> There the philosopher speaks. The truer Augustine has far other thoughts of God. All his writings burn with passionate longing after God, the supreme goodness and beauty and truth. Even here, perhaps, the influence of Greek thought is not absent. It is less the Biblical idea of God's holiness than the idea of absolute truth and beauty that fascinates. At the same time the Christian doctrines of righteousness and love are far from being forgotten. For him there are but two existences—God and the soul. God is light, truth, life ; in the soul dwells darkness, misery, death. But where the soul lays hold of God and God of the soul, old things pass away. "What wouldst thou know ? Say briefly. I long to know God and the soul. Nothing else ? Nothing at all." "If they who flee to thee find thee by faith, give faith ; if by virtue, virtue ; if

<sup>1</sup> As to the Trinity, see Loofs, p. 181.

by knowledge, knowledge. Increase my faith, increase my hope, increase my love." "In this I sinned, that not in himself but in his creatures, in myself and others I sought pleasures, sublimities, truths. And so I rushed into griefs, confusions, errors." "Who will grant me to come to rest in thee? Who will grant that thou mayest come into my heart and inebriate it, that I may forsake my evils and embrace thee, my one good? Say to my soul: I am thy salvation." "Too late I loved thee, thou primeval and yet new loveliness, too late I loved thee.<sup>1</sup> And lo! thou wast within and I without, and I sought thee there; and into these lovely things which thou madest I with my deformity rushed. Thou wast with me, and I was not with thee. Those things kept me far from thee, which had not been if they had not been in thee." "His coming is his humanity, his abiding his divinity. His divinity is (the goal) whither we go, his humanity (the way) by which we go." "O

<sup>1</sup> Embodied in Wesley's fine hymn—

Ah, why did I so late thee know,  
Thee, lovelier than the sons of men?

Another saying of Augustine: "Thou madest us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rests in thee," is finely rendered by Tersteegen and Wesley—

My heart is pained, nor can it be  
At rest till it finds rest in thee.

eternal truth and true love and dear eternity, thou art my God." "It is good for me to cleave to God; this is the perfect good. Wishest thou more? I grieve for the wishers. Brethren, why wish you more? There is nothing better than cleaving to God." "By faith, hope, love God must be worshipped." "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt." "He loves thee not, who loves aught with thee which he loves not for thy sake." The Triune God alone truly or really is: the supreme Good, the Good of all goods, Good from whom all goods come, without whom nothing is good, Good because good without others. "I beheld all the things that are beneath thee, and I saw that they are neither wholly real nor wholly unreal; they are real so far as they come from thee, they are unreal because they are not what thou art; for that alone is truly real which abides unchanged." In the *De Doctr. Christ.* things are divided into those which we enjoy and those which in our pilgrim state we should only use as "helps by which we may reach those things which make us blessed, and be able to cleave to them"; God is the only thing that can be enjoyed, our supreme, only goal; to enjoy God is eternal life. We can only cleave to God by love. In these strains Cicero and Plato are heard as well as prophets and apostles.



### III

#### THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY

WITHOUT this controversy the list of possible interpretations of Christianity in the early ages would not have been exhausted. The ethical rationalism which finds expression in it was not unknown before, and it has been common enough since down to our own days; but now it found professed advocates in Pelagius, a British monk, and his colleagues Cœlestius, a more accomplished man than Pelagius himself, and Julian of Eclanum.<sup>1</sup> All that can be said for the doctrine was said then. The pith of the teaching is the light view it takes of the nature and effects of sin, with the consequent higher estimate of human nature and lower estimate of redemption. Sin exists

<sup>1</sup> The movement began about 400 A.D. The larger works of Pelagius have perished. We have only, besides fragments, commentaries on Paul's epistles in Jerome's works, his *Libellus fidei ad Innocentium*, and a letter to Demetrias. Of the other two leaders we have only fragments, chiefly in Augustine.

only in definite acts of will. Sin of nature and disposition, and still more original sin, are strongly denied. The chief points were summed up in six propositions by Paulinus of Milan, and brought as a charge against Cœlestius at Carthage in 411: 1. Adam was mortal by creation, and would have died whether he sinned or not. 2. Adam's sin injured himself only, and not the human race. 3. Infants are in the state in which Adam was before his fall. 4. Neither does the whole human race die through Adam's death, nor will it rise through Christ's resurrection. 5. Infants, although not baptized, have eternal life. 6. Man may live without sin; before Christ's advent there were such men; men enter the kingdom of heaven by way of the law as well as by way of the Gospel. It will be noticed that the question of baptism figured largely in the dispute. The early Church taught, and Pelagians denied, that baptism was necessary to do away the taint of original sin in children.<sup>1</sup>

The ethical motive of Pelagius is well expressed in his own words, "As often as I have

<sup>1</sup> The Pelagians were anxious to evade the charge of disparaging baptism. Augustine replies: "You fear to say: Let them not be baptized, lest not only your faces be defiled by the spitting of the men, but also your heads be battered by the sandals of the women."

to speak of the beginning of morals and the manner of a holy life, I am accustomed first to point out the force and character of human nature, and to show what it can accomplish, and in this way stir up the hearer's mind to see the beauty of virtue, lest I should summon in vain to things which are beforehand thought impossible."<sup>1</sup> A chief Pelagian contention was the inalienableness of free will in the individual. This was made the very essence of human nature, just as formerly Arians made unbegottenness the essence of God. No limitation or qualification was admitted. The collective or hereditary principle was quite overlooked. "Freedom consists in the possibility of committing or abstaining from sin." By no possibility can this power be divorced from human nature. Good and evil lie in the particular actions of men. A completely sinless life is therefore within the reach of all. A sinful nature would destroy the guilt of sin. Sin is not a thing (*res*) but an act (*actus*); it is "not a fault of nature but of will." Original sin would make all holiness impossible, "because what is inborn can never be eradicated, but continues to the end of life." Between Adam's sin and ours there is no provable con-

<sup>1</sup> One is strongly reminded of the rationalism of the last and the present century.

nection. The sins of parents as little pass to children as those of children to parents. Augustine's views on marriage and concupiscence are denounced as Manichæan. Adam's light, childish offence made little difference to him and none to us. His death and ours is a law of nature, not a punishment of sin. Infants have no sin, and do not need baptism to take sin away. Rom. 5<sup>12</sup> only means "that sin did not pass to other men from the first man by generation but by imitation." The universality of sin is explained by imitation and long practice. Man's naturally sensuous and worldly nature must also be remembered. All this would prove that there are really no sinners, but only sinful acts.—On this basis the need and meaning of grace are greatly reduced, although they are not formally denied. Pelagius said that God's grace is given in order that God's commands may be obeyed more easily; to which Augustine replied that in this case they might be kept, although less easily, without grace. Grace consists in the natural endowments of reason and free will, and finally in Christ's teaching and example. Christianity becomes a law stricter than that of the Old Testament. Evil habit must be effaced by good habit, for it is "*habitus* (*consuetudo*) that nourishes vice or virtue."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the account of Pelagianism in Shedd, *ibid.* ii. 93 ff.

The true elements in this doctrine, as well as its shallowness as a whole, are obvious.<sup>1</sup> Augustine had no difficulty in exposing its weakness and insufficiency, and he never rendered finer service than on this subject, although his arguments are not all equally strong and his positive teaching is chargeable with exaggeration. If Pelagianism were true, he said, Christ need not have come into the world. He appeals to Christian experience, to the prayers for forgiveness, to the universality of death, to the need of baptism for infants, to a series of Scripture passages (Rom. 5<sup>12</sup>, 7<sup>14-20</sup>, 8<sup>26</sup>; Gen. 2<sup>7</sup>; Ps. 51, 143<sup>2</sup>; Eph. 2<sup>3</sup>; John 8<sup>36</sup>).

The controversy was fierce, short, decisive. The Pelagian theory never had any chance of success, at least in the west. In the east, where free will had always been strongly asserted, it found more favour.<sup>2</sup> A synod at Diospolis or Lydda and another at Jerusalem pronounced Pelagius orthodox. The doctrine was condemned

<sup>1</sup> Pelagianism exaggerated free will as an essential of human nature, as if it were a fixed quantity and beyond the reach of change. The power to take either course (*utriusque partis possibilitas*) can never be alienated. The counterbalancing principle of solidarity and the influence of conduct on character were ignored.

<sup>2</sup> Still the east was not Pelagian. The controversy never emerged there.

at Carthage in 411, 416, and 418, at Milan, 416. In the east it was strongly opposed by the Spanish bishop Orosius and by Jerome. Both sides sought the support of Rome, first of Innocent I., then of Zosimus. Both Popes vacillated. A synod at Rome (417) even certified the orthodoxy of Cœlestius and Pelagius. But Carthage held its ground. The emperor issued an edict (418) against the heretical leaders. Then Zosimus drew up a letter in the orthodox sense, which the bishops were required to sign. Some refused, Julian at their head.<sup>1</sup> Finally the Council of Ephesus (431) joined in the condemnation. Still the following of Pelagianism was considerable—in Rome, in South Italy and Sicily, Britain, Dalmatia.

<sup>1</sup> His principle was: "What reason refutes authority cannot justify." He sees no difference between righteous heathen and pious Christians.

## IV

### THEORY OF THE CHURCH. THE DONATIST CONTROVERSY <sup>1</sup>

THE Donatist schism had existed about a century when Augustine became bishop of Hippo. It first began in the time of the Diocletian persecution, and arose out of the imperial edict requiring Christians to surrender their sacred books to the authorities. Those who obeyed were called traditors. A sect arose in Carthage holding severe views on the question, as well as on purity of church-membership, and the sacraments. Cæcilian, bishop of Carthage, was an object of hate to the party,<sup>2</sup> along with Felix

<sup>1</sup> Optatus of Mileve (Numidia), *De Schismate Donatistarum* (c. 368). Augustine, *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani*; *De Baptismo cont. Donatistas*; *Cont. Litteras Petilianus*; *De Unitate Ecclesiæ* (after 400); *Cont. Cresconium* (c. 406), *De Unico Baptismo cont. Petilianum* (c. 410), *Breviculus Collationis cum Donatistis* (411), *Ad Donatistas post Collationem* (412), *De Gestis cum Emerito* (418), *Cont. Gaudentium* (420).

<sup>2</sup> He was said to have been ordained by an unworthy man.



of Aptunga, who had consecrated him, and who was accused as a traditor. Majorinus became the rival bishop of Carthage, and he was followed by Donatus the Great. The sect grew in numbers and in fanaticism. Extreme reverence for confessors and martyrs, pride in suffering persecution, strict church-discipline, dependence of sacraments on valid ordination, were among its distinctive features. Practically there were two churches in Africa, each claiming to be the Catholic one. A Donatist synod in 330 had two hundred and seventy bishops present. Constantine in vain tried to suppress the movement, as also did following emperors. Other questions arose, divisions took place within the party, the spirit of fanaticism gained strength. The schism was almost confined to Africa. The chief questions involved were considered at the synod of Arles (316), and decided against the Donatists. It was decided that ordinations even by a traditor and baptisms by heretics are valid, *i.e.* that the validity of sacraments is independent of the personal character of the minister,—a question raised in Cyprian's days, when Cyprian was found on the other side (p. 58). When Augustine became bishop, he took the Donatist question earnestly in hand. A three days' conference was held at Carthage (June, 411) under the presidency of

Marcellinus, an imperial officer, who decided against the Donatists. In the debates, the narrowness, arrogance, and impracticableness of the party came fully out. The Donatists refused even to sit with their opponents. The sect was then rigorously suppressed by the State, Augustine approving, and it gradually passed away. The Donatists took high ground as to episcopacy and sacramental efficacy. But they required bishops and priests to be holy men. The absence of personal holiness vitiated their official acts. The Donatists, in short, held to a certain extent the Puritan ideal. "Catholic," they said, did not depend on geographical extent, but on the possession of all the sacraments. They also condemned the alliance of the Church with the State. "What have Christians to do with kings, bishops with the Court?" The Church sacraments are worthless because of the unworthiness of the ministers. How can any one give a holiness he has not? Hence re-baptism is necessary in the case of those baptized by heretics. As Donatists have the full sacraments, they are the Catholic Church.

Optatus of Mileve first of all states the opposite case. On his own ground he has to acknowledge the Donatist sacraments to be valid. "With you and with us there is one

ecclesiastical practice, common lessons, the same faith, the same sacraments of the faith, the same mysteries." The efficacy of sacraments is from God, and is not marred by unworthiness in the minister. Only the Trinitarian formula and faith in the candidate are necessary. "Ministers (*operarii*) may change, sacraments cannot change. Those who baptize are ministers, not masters, and sacraments are holy in themselves, not through men." Thus, the Donatists are a Church, but not in the full sense, only a "quasi church." There is but one house of God—the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is catholic because it extends over all nations, and holy, not through the character of the men composing it, but because it has the symbol of the Trinity, the chair of Peter, the faith of believers, the saving precepts of Christ, and, above all, the sacraments. If some bishops in Diocletian's days were said to be traditors, this is not a matter of vital importance, and it is historically incorrect. There are, no doubt, bad men in the Church; but to exclude them before the time is forbidden by the parables of the Tares and the Net. A state of perfect holiness is the hope of the future. The Donatist mistake is in vainly seeking to anticipate that state.

Augustine uses similar arguments on a broader

scale. The Catholic Church is connected with the apostles through their successors, the bishops. Outside this Church, the body of Christ, there is no truth, no salvation; separation from it is sacrilege. Only pride and want of charity can lead anyone to break this unity. He acknowledges the Roman primacy (*principatus apostolicæ cathedræ*), but no special authority. The Roman bishop may err like others.—Augustine contends for the objective efficacy of the sacraments. They are God's gifts, and therefore not dependent on the moral character of the administrator. By baptism and ordination a permanent character<sup>1</sup> is impressed on the subject, which is never lost and cannot be renewed. But then it may be objected, on Augustine's theory the same applies to Donatist sacraments. Augustine parries this by introducing a distinction between the sacrament and its effect or use, and limiting the latter to the Church. He thus imposes another arbitrary condition inferred from his view of Church unity. The advantage only comes to those in the Church. The outward and inward aspects of a sacrament are sharply distinguished. "The sacrament is one thing, the

<sup>1</sup> *Dominicus character*=indelible character, a military phrase. Augustine introduced this idea, and also the *obicem opponere* used in the Trent definitions.

efficacy (*virtus*) of the sacrament another." The visible sign is a symbol of invisible good. "The signs (*signacula*) of divine things are visible, but the invisible things themselves are honoured in them. They are called sacraments, because in them one thing is seen, another understood." The symbol has a certain likeness to what it sets forth. "The word is added to the element and it becomes a sacrament, itself as it were a visible word." Dr. Seeberg says that "becomes" is to be taken subjectively. "Whence," asks Augustine, "such virtue in the water, that it touches the body and cleanses the heart, except through the active word? Not because of the words, but because of the faith" (*non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur*). Still it is not all symbol. As a rule, there is a real divine working in the sacrament. God really forgives sin in baptism, in it as in ordination impressing an "indelible character." The sacraments are simply symbols, but partaking brings real objective divine blessing.

Baptism is the sacrament of forgiveness, especially forgiveness of original sin. A daily forgiveness is still necessary; but this depends in part on the first one. Prayer, alms, good works would bring no forgiveness to one unbaptized. Augustine's doctrine of the Last

Supper seems to be more strongly symbolic.<sup>1</sup> "The Lord did not hesitate to say: This is my body, when he gave the sign of his body." "To eat that bread and drink that cup is to abide in Christ, and have him abiding in us." There are not wanting passages in which Augustine speaks of partaking of the body of Christ; but his real thought is different, while a real blessing is meant.

Yet this doctrine of outward unity as belonging to the very nature of the Church is crossed by two other representations. No one recognises more clearly than Augustine the difference between nominal and real Christians. It is the real saints<sup>2</sup> who are the Church, the Bride of Christ, the House of God; to them only all Christian promises and privileges apply. It is their prayers which prevail. Men are "not to be thought to be in Christ's body which is the Church, because they partake in a physical way in its sacraments." "God gives the sacrament of grace even through the wicked, but the grace itself only through himself or through his saints." They form the "invisible communion (*compages*) of love." Thus for Augustine there are really

<sup>1</sup> Seeberg, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> "Communion of saints" is first used at the synod of Nîmes, 394 A.D., by the Donatists and Augustine.

two Churches, the apparent and the real, the outward and the inward, the visible and the invisible, although these terms are not used. He compares the two sections to wheat and tares, the outer and inner man, and points out the difference between belonging to the house and being in the house, thus tacitly acknowledging the element of truth in the Donatist position.

The matter is complicated again by the doctrine of election. The elect or "number of the predestinated" are the true Church, whether in or out of the visible Church. How are the two related? It seems to be assumed that the Church of the elect and the spiritual Church are identical. But then what of the outward Church? Here there is great want of clearness, not to speak of contradiction.

Augustine's doctrine of church unity, resting on a communion of bishops and sacraments, is identical with Cyprian's, but more fully developed; and it is identical with the theory of the Middle Ages and later days. There is no salvation out of this organised community; and even on Augustine's admission there is no salvation in it without the inner spiritual grace. It must then be held that this saving grace of God is only received within the one visible Church. How does this agree with the facts of



experience and history ? Other parts of Augustine's teaching were strenuously opposed and rejected. Not so this one, indicating that it was in harmony with traditional and contemporary belief, as seems only too true. It was first challenged at the Reformation. Much had to be added before the Papal system was complete, but the plan and outline were there. The mixture of elements—good and bad, heavenly and earthly, Christian and heathen, in a word, of gold, silver, and precious stones, along with wood, hay, and stubble—is passing strange.

## V

### AUGUSTINE'S TEACHING IN LATER CHURCH HISTORY

THE reception Augustine's teaching met with is deeply interesting. His theory of church unity and authority was tacitly accepted without a murmur, no doubt because it fell in with existing belief and practice. It is fundamental in the Roman Church still. Not so his doctrine of election or predestination, with its related points of the universal and utter corruption of human nature, irresistible grace, and final perseverance. Even on this subject several principles passed at once into the popular creed, such as Adam's headship of the race, original sin within certain limits, the transmission of sin, which are held in Arminian as in Calvinist circles. Especially was it recognised that his masterly polemic against Pelagianism proper had rendered as great service to Christian truth as the polemic of Athanasius against Arianism. Pelagianism

never lifted up its head again within the Christian Church, although Semi-Pelagianism has had great influence. Dr. Loofs well says: "Pelagianism was condemned, but the whole of Augustinianism was not approved." No sooner was his predestination theory propounded than controversy about it broke out, and continued more or less through the Middle Ages. Nothing but respect for Augustine's genius and services to Christianity prevented its open condemnation by the majority. It found, of course, individual defenders always. But it never, as a whole, became the creed of a great Christian community until the Reformation, when it was professed at first by all the Reformers, and was formally adopted by the Calvinist side of the Reformation. It is a strange fact that one half of Augustine's system forms the groundwork of the Papal polity, and the other half the groundwork of a large portion of Protestant Christendom. Calvin's predestination theory is simply Augustine's teaching carried a step farther, and made to affirm reprobation as well as predestination. Why Calvin's name was substituted for Augustine's is a mystery—an injustice to both men.<sup>1</sup> There is no more common ground of

<sup>1</sup> A modern Calvinist like Dr. Shedd prefers to be called an Augustinian.

invective against the Reformation on the part of Roman Catholic controversialists than Calvin's doctrine of election, with its dreadful logical consequences. But they are seldom or never fair enough to indicate the source of his teaching.<sup>1</sup> Their favourite Father's responsibility is kept in the background.

At a synod in Carthage (418) the following portions only of Augustine's teaching were adopted: (1) Adam became mortal first through the Fall; (2) children should be baptized for remission of sins; (3) the idea of grace as an impartation of inward strength for what is good, as taught already by Tertullian and Cyprian, is approved;<sup>2</sup> (4) sinless perfection on earth is impossible. This was endorsed at a synod in Rome in the same year under Zosimus. Thus Augustine's fundamental thoughts of predestination, man's entire incapacity for good, irresistible grace, are passed by.

The monks at Adrumetum, near Carthage, were divided in opinion, some preaching grace in

<sup>1</sup> Even Calvin's action in regard to Servetus is paralleled by Augustine's approval of the wholesale persecution of Donatists by the State; he justified it by Luke 14<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> "Whoever shall say that the grace of God, by which we are justified through our Lord Jesus Christ, avails only for remission of sins already committed, and not also as a help to prevent their commission, let him be anathema."

such a way as to deny free will to man, others saying that free will is assisted by grace that we may approve and do what is right. Augustine, when informed of this, warns against the antinomianism of the first party, affirming both "free will and the grace of God, without whose help man can neither turn to God nor advance in God." It was on this occasion that Augustine wrote his treatises *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* and *De Correptione et Gratia*.

Even Augustine's admirer and friend Jerome († 420) knows nothing of Augustine's peculiar doctrine of grace. While rejecting Pelagianism, he leaves scope for freedom alongside grace. "Free will depends on God's help, and needs his succour in each several act." "We understand that our doing what we wish is a matter not only of our ability, but also of God's mercy, if he should assist our will." "God is so good that he chooses him whom he sees meantime to be good, and who, he knows, will sin, giving him power to turn and repent." "God crowns in us what he himself wrought: our will, which offered what it could, and the effort that seeks to obey."

The chief controversy, however, took place in South Gaul, where it lasted a long time. The opposers of Augustine's predestinarian views

were the most numerous and influential. These opposers, who otherwise were great admirers of Augustine, included John Cassian († c. 445), founder and head of the monastery at Massilia, Hilary of Arles († 449), Vincent of Lerins (c. 430). It was in reply to the objections urged by this school, reported to him by his friends Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary (both laymen), that Augustine wrote *De Prædestinatione Sanctorum* and *De Dono Perseverantiæ*. The objectors urged generally that Augustine's doctrine offended against church feeling, antiquity, and patristic opinion; it is dangerous, because it paralyses preaching and moral earnestness, and "under the name of predestination introduces a certain fatalistic necessity or affirms a Lord who is the maker of diverse natures." The theory is not necessary, it was said, to refute Pelagius. All men sinned in Adam, and suffered injury accordingly. Still man can desire and accept healing, and it is this desire that grace assists. Man, not God, makes the beginning. God would save all; the propitiation applies to all. Predestination is based on prescience. There is no fixed number of elect and reprobate. All might be saved, though all are not. The fault is man's. The Semi-Pelagian tendencies are evident.

Cassian's position is similar. He starts from

the monkish ideal, and emphasises both man's sinfulness<sup>1</sup> and moral capacity. Grace and free will co-operate. By grace is meant instruction, spiritual enlightenment, and divine inspiration. The idea of co-operation between grace and free will is strongly pressed. While all good in man is occasionally traced to grace, the general drift is to make all good equally the product of the two factors. Man may make the beginning, as Zacchæus did, or God, as in the case of Matthew and Paul. "Free will always remains in man, which can either neglect or accept God's grace." "All who perish perish against God's will."

Faustus, bishop of Rhegium († c. 495), was a pronounced advocate of Semi-Pelagian views.<sup>2</sup> Free will is weakened, not abolished, by the Fall. There is infirmity, not impossibility. Man can still accept salvation and co-operate with grace; he makes the beginning in good, which is then assisted and completed by grace. Grace also consists of outward means—preaching, promises, warnings—not in inward influence. Predestination is simply prescience. His teaching was approved by synods at Arles and Lyons (c. 473).

<sup>1</sup> Especially gluttony, uncleanness, covetousness, anger, sadness, acedia (listlessness, ennui), vainglory, pride.

<sup>2</sup> "Semi-Augustinian" would be just as applicable.



Vincent's "Commonitorium" (434) insists upon the old ways of traditional belief. In one sentence he is supposed to have Augustine in view: "Let novelty cease to attack antiquity." He raises the question how "the truth of the Catholic faith" may be distinguished from "the falsehood of heretical corruption." He replies: In two ways, first, by the authority of the divine law, then by the tradition of the Catholic Church. "In the Catholic Church itself the chief care is to be that we hold what has been believed *everywhere, always, and by all*. This will be done if we follow universality, antiquity, agreement." Love of knowledge must not lead to the neglect of this canon. "Whatever of the entire dogma of the Church can be grasped by the understanding, let them grasp; what cannot, let them believe."

The only prominent defender of Augustine at this date was Prosper, who however merely repeats what Augustine had said. The same is true of an anonymous book on the same side, *De Vocatione Gentium*. There was also an anonymous book on the opposite side, *Prædestinatus, sive prædestinatorum hæresis et libri S. Augustino temere adscripti refutatio*, written, as some think, in a bantering style. But the antinomian inferences drawn may have been.

meant seriously. Prosper avows the strange principle that the more difficult anything is to grasp with the understanding, the more merit there is in believing it. Great courage is necessary to consent to mere authority, where no reason is evident,—a position advocated by some in our own day. Mediævalists held the same opinion.

In the next century we find Fulgentius of Ruspe in Numidia († 533) defending a twofold predestination. "All the predestinated are they whom he wills to be saved (1 Tim. 2<sup>4</sup>), who are called *all*, because they belong to both sexes, every race of men, every rank, age, and condition. The will of the omnipotent God is always fulfilled, because his power is invincible." Of Esau he says: "By just anger he was made ready for punishment." In South Gaul, also, Avitus of Vienne († 523) and Cæsarius of Arles († 542) opposed the teaching of Faustus. A synod of Valence, under Semi-Pelagian influence, took part against Cæsarius, but at a later synod at Orange in the same year (July 3, 529) he got propositions accepted which affirmed a modified Augustinianism. On his application Pope Felix IV. (526–530) had sent some statements drawn from Augustine and Prosper, which were included in the definitions at Orange,

affirming man's natural incapacity for all good, and the absolute necessity of grace, while keeping silence about predestination and irresistible grace. At the request of Cæsarius, Pope Boniface II. (530–532) approved these decisions.

Thus there can be no doubt about the rejection of strict Pelagianism everywhere in the Church. But this is done with only a more or less approximate acceptance of Augustine's teaching. As a rule, except by pronounced Augustinians, predestination and irresistible grace are not affirmed. Gradually Semi-Pelagianism shared the same fate, for similar reasons to those which secured the rejection of Semi-Arianism. Popes like Leo (442), Cœlestine I. (528–530), Gelasius I. († 496) condemned Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism. Pope Hormisdas (514–523) even commended the teaching of some of Augustine's strictly predestinarian books, such as those addressed to Hilary and Prosper<sup>1</sup> (*De Prædest.* and *De Dono Persever.*).

The decisions of the synod of Orange in 529, mentioned above, which virtually put an end to Semi-Pelagianism, are in substance as follows. Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism offend against the rule of the Catholic faith. By Adam's sin he himself and his whole posterity were ruined

<sup>1</sup> Seeberg, p. 322.

in body and soul ; through Adam sin and death came to the race. No one has anything of his own but falsehood and sin. Free will is so weakened and biassed that man cannot of himself believe in and love God. If man, even if he had not fallen, could not have stood fast in his original integrity without divine help, how can he without divine grace repair what he destroyed ? Grace works in us the calling on God, the seeking after purity and faith. Grace is "the infusion and operation of the Spirit." Our believing, willing, and using means as we ought are due to the infusion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. To believe is to assent to the gospel preaching. The faith so inspired by God leads us to baptism. It is baptism that renews our will. "Free will, weakened in the first man, cannot be repaired except by the grace of baptism." God now works in us to every good work. "The help of God is also to be sought by the regenerate, that they may be able to reach the good end or continue in good works." Thus every good deed is referred to God. Our worth before God rests on his gift, not on our merit. Twofold predestination is expressly condemned. "We ought to preach and believe that by the sin of the first man free will was so biassed and weakened that no one since can either love God

as he ought, or believe in God, or do for God's sake what is good, unless the grace of divine mercy prevent (precede) him. . . . We believe that, grace being received through baptism, all the baptized, Christ helping and co-operating, can and ought to fulfil those things which belong to the soul's salvation, if they will faithfully strive. But that some are predestinated by divine authority to evil, we not only do not believe, but also, if there are any who would believe only evil, with all abhorrence we pronounce anathema upon them. . . . God himself, no good merits preceding, first inspires us with faith and love of himself, that we may both faithfully seek the sacrament of baptism, and after baptism by his assistance may be able to fulfil those things which are pleasing to him." Thus "grace alone" is cleverly identified with baptismal grace, while Augustine's distinctive teaching is set aside. "The after-world inherited the ecclesiastical dress of Augustine, not his spirit" (Loofs). On the whole, after making allowance for grievous error of many kinds, we can scarcely fail to see evidence of God's guiding hand, in the rejection of the two extremes of predestinarianism on the one hand, and still more of Pelagianism on the other.

## VI

### AUGUSTINE'S MANUAL OF THEOLOGY ("ENCHIRIDION AD LAURENTIUM")

LAURENTIUS, a Roman layman, asked Augustine to write a compend of Christian doctrine for general use; and this treatise is the reply.<sup>1</sup> It is the only systematic account we have from Augustine of the Christian faith. As it was written for general use, it is free from technical forms. At the same time Augustine's philosophical and other modes of view are not difficult to discern. The work is valuable as giving us—what is so difficult to find—a specimen of the practical teaching of those days, a creed of the people, not of theologians. It does not profess to give a complete survey of doctrine, but simply the most important parts of Christian truth. Augustine's views on sin, grace, and predestination

<sup>1</sup> Written about 421 A.D. Dr. Seeberg gives an excellent summary, p. 300, to which the present chapter is greatly indebted.

are skilfully woven in ; the hierarchical element is kept in the background. It is disappointing to find so much stress laid on outward works, on merit, fasting, alms, worship of saints and relics, the ascetic life ; but all these elements formed part of the "vulgar Catholicism" of the day, and they are found in still greater prominence in Augustine's other works. The theme announced is faith, hope, love, or what is to be believed, hoped, loved. It is significant that while the Alexandrian motto was knowledge, Augustine's was love.

Augustine recognises the place of the intellect and reason as well as of Scripture in religion. Those truths which are discovered by the natural faculties are to be defended by reason. Those which go beyond this point are to be "undoubtedly believed on the testimony of those by whom the Scripture, which has now come rightly to be called divine, was composed, who, with the divine assistance either through the body or the mind, were able to see or even foresee these things."<sup>1</sup> This is the beginning of the faith which works through love, whose highest stage is vision.

<sup>1</sup> From his other works we know that to Augustine the supreme and the only unerring authority is Holy Scripture ; see *Doctr. Christ.* ii. 8 ; *Unit. Eccl.* 3, 5 ; *Bapt.* ii. 3, 4 ; *Civ. Dei.* xi. 3. "Faith would totter, if the authority of the sacred Scriptures should be shaken" (*Doctr. Christ.*).



Faith has its object in the creed, hope and love are exercised in prayer. From the objects of religious faith is to be excluded all physical knowledge. "It is enough for a Christian to believe that the cause of created things, whether heavenly or earthly, is nothing but the goodness of the Creator, and that there is no nature which is not either himself or from him." This God is a Trinity. The world was created good, even evil fitting into its harmony. Evil is "privation of good." What exists is good, because from God; even evil, so far as it exists, is good; "corruption can only destroy good by destroying nature." As privation of being, evil assumes good to exist; "there can be no evil unless there is a good." A Christian needs to know, not the system of things, but "the causes of good and evil things," if he would avoid error and misery. To err is to hold false for true. Every error is not sin, and the assertion of the Academy that every assent should be kept in suspense, is wrong; for without assent faith is impossible. In things having no relation to the way leading us to God, error (the faith not being touched) is no sin, or only a minute and slight sin; yet it is one of the ills of this life. But sin is falsehood, for "words are instituted, not that men may deceive one another by them,

but that any one by their means may convey his own thoughts into another's mind." What we need to know about the cause of good and evil is that "the cause of good things is nothing but the goodness of God, but of evil the will of one mutably good—first of an angel, then of man—(that will) falling away from the immutable good." The primal evil of man is to nill what God wills; from which follow ignorance of things to be done, desire for noxious things, error, grief, fear, as well as bodily death. Adam by his sin "vitiating his race in the root, and subjected it to the penalty of death and condemnation." All "born through carnal concupiscence" have original sin. The entire race lies under God's most righteous anger. But God is not only just, but merciful,<sup>1</sup> and does not leave men to their merited fate. As angels are not connected together by natural descent, the fall of some did not involve that of all. Mankind are to form a substitute for fallen angels, perhaps a better one. The portion of mankind, to which God promised deliverance, could not attain it by free will, but only by grace. As God's servants they are really free. Even faith is God's gift. It is wrong to say merely, "Man's will alone is not sufficient, unless God's mercy also is present,"

<sup>1</sup> An antithesis commonly found since Augustine.

for God works all things. "Since through original sin men were under God's anger, so much the heavier and more dangerous as they had added greater or more sins, a Mediator (*i.e.* a reconciler) was necessary to appease that anger by offering a wonderful sacrifice." The anger of God is "not such an agitation as is in the mind of an angry man," but "his vengeance which is nothing but just." The Mediator became man ("the divinity not being changed into flesh") without sin; not born as ordinarily "of both sexes with fleshly concupiscence and subject to guilt," but of the Virgin. Christ was God and man. No merit of the man Jesus brought about this union, but grace only; his human birth is also a work of the Holy Spirit. But Christ is not on this account a Son of the Spirit in his humanity, as he is a Son of the Father in his divinity. But the grace of God is seen in the incarnation, "by which, without previous merits, man was joined to the Word of God in such unity of person, that the same should be the Son of God who was Son of man, and Son of man who was Son of God." Christ, who is absolutely without sin, was called sin, because in the Old Testament the expiatory offerings were so called. He was "a sacrifice for sins, through which we might be reconciled." He died in a way to sin

in dying to the flesh in which was the likeness of sin. Baptism is a figure of this; we die to sin and live through the laver of the new birth. All need baptism; through it children die to original sin, adults to the sins added to this. "That little children are bound also by the sins of parents, not only of the first men but also their own parents, of whom they are born, is not improbable" (Ezek. 18<sup>2</sup>). Baptism serves mainly to release from original sin, since individual sins may also be healed by penance. Original sin, as the root of all sin, is abolished only through the one Mediator, the man Jesus. Christ's baptism had significance for us, not for him, "to commend humility." The same holds good of his death: "That the devil, being overcome by true justice, not by violent power, because he had most unjustly slain him without any desert of sin, might most justly through him lose those whom he held fast through desert of sin." "As in him there was true death, so in us there is true remission of sins; and as in him there was a true resurrection, so in us there is true justification." The atoning work of Christ is represented under the threefold form of expiatory sacrifice, deliverance from the devil, and a pattern to Christians.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Seeberg in a note (p. 304) illustrates this subject from

Following the order of the creed, Augustine goes on to speak of the Holy Spirit and the Church, which includes the glorified in heaven and the angels; then of forgiveness. One condition of forgiveness is penance "by which satisfaction is made to the Church." There are some Christians who think that, because they have been baptized and have not denied Christ, despite the worst sins they will be saved "by fire, by long-lasting although not eternal fire, according to the magnitude of their offences." Augustine leaves the question open, as Scripture does not decide. Only faith that is shown in works saves, not faith without works. He also leaves it open whether for those who by penance and especially by alms have obtained forgiveness, a purifying fire does not exist after this life,—whether some believers "will be saved more slowly or quickly by a certain purgatorial fire as they have more or less loved perishing goods."<sup>1</sup>

other works of Augustine. Christ by his death (1) brought us forgiveness, cleansed us from sin by his sacrifice, laid down a ransom for us, removed God's anger; (2) freed men from the power of the devil, who illegally seized the sinless flesh of Christ, which thus became a trap to him; (3) revealed God to us in his wisdom and love; (4) gave an example of humility, patience, and submission.

<sup>1</sup> In Gregory I.'s time (590-604 A.D.) purgatory is positively taught, as well as the efficacy of the Mass in relieving souls

Certainly we cannot by daily alms atone for sins which exclude from God's kingdom, or buy the right to sin in the future. For the light sins of every day "prayer makes satisfaction," the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer. Our forgiveness of the sins of others is a form of almsgiving, indeed the best form. We cannot withstand sin "unless divinely assisted." Whoever does not believe in or despises forgiveness in the Church commits the sin against the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup>

The Resurrection is the last article in the creed dwelt on. To God, man's body does not perish, although it is not necessary that every particle of matter should be restored. They are spiritual bodies, but as to substance flesh. Even the lost have a body; a constant dying and perishing is their lot. Condemnation has degrees, the least for children. "The lightest punishment will be that of those who have added nothing to

suffering there. "In Gregory nearly everything has its roots in Augustine, and scarcely anything is Augustinian" (Seeberg).

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of penance is only a continuation of earlier teaching in Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose. Sins are divided into venial and grave. Penance is threefold—(1) for sins before baptism; the faith of those who present the children benefits: (2) for lighter daily sins by prayer, alms, and fasting: (3) for graver sins entailing excommunication. For these, satisfaction is imposed by the bishop, including public confession. This third form can only take place once, like baptism, of which it is a continuation.



original sin." Why one is saved, another not, we shall know one day. God's will is the only answer we can give now. Since God permits evil, its existence must be good; otherwise an almighty will would not permit it. What God wills he does; he wills that all shall be saved; yet many are not. God in mercy turns the evil will of the one to good, without regard to future works. To the others he is just. Strictly taken, eternal life is not reward, but grace. "Let it be understood, therefore, that even the good deserts of man are God's gifts. When eternal life is given them, what is given but grace for grace?" After death and before the resurrection souls exist in "hidden abodes," where they fare according to merit. Friends can relieve their state by the Mass and alms. But these only become "propitiations" for those who have deserved it on earth. Eternal punishment ought not to be doubted. The state is a terrible one: "To perish from the kingdom of God, to be exiled from the city of God, to be estranged from the life of God, to be destitute of the great abundance of the sweetness of God."

These are the things to be believed. Hope is then discussed. The Lord's Prayer, which is the programme of hope, is then expounded. We hope only in God, not in men or in ourselves.



Then comes Love. "When it is asked, whether anyone is a good man, we do not ask what he believes or hopes, but what he loves. For he who loves aright without doubt believes and hopes aright; but he who loves not believes in vain, even if those things which he believes be true; hopes in vain, even if those things which he hopes be taught to belong to true happiness; unless also he believe and hope this, that it may be given to him, asking that he may love. For although one cannot hope without love, yet it may happen that he love not that, without which he cannot arrive at what he hopes for. As if one should hope for eternal life (which who loves not?) and love not righteousness, without which no one arrives at it."

"1. When reason does not resist, we live after the flesh; this is man's first state: 2. knowledge of sin by the law, but sinning knowingly; this is man's second state: 3. faith in God's help, man begins to be led by the Spirit of God, he lusts against the flesh with greater force of love; this is man's third state of good hope: 4. at last peace remains after this life . . . Of these four different states the first is before law, the second under law, the third under grace, the fourth in full and perfect peace." "Little love is little righteousness; great love is great

righteousness; perfect love is perfect righteousness."

This is a strange mixture, and some things are perforce omitted; but it is a picture of the man and of the times. In Augustine we see the best and the worst of early post-apostolic Christianity. It is well to understand what the cry "Back to the Fathers," on the lips of Tractarians and their successors, means both in belief and practice. It is not easy to explain how Christianity could be so transformed in the course of a few centuries. Only three centuries intervene between the last of the apostles and the Church of Augustine. It is often said that Protestants would feel themselves strangers in the Church of the Fathers; the same might be said of the apostles and New Testament Christians. It needs much more than a theory of development to connect the primitive Church with the Church of the fifth century.

One of the best proofs of Augustine's many-sided greatness is that, with so many errors and faults, he is the object of universal admiration and love. His mistakes are largely those of his age, his merits are his own. In passionate devotion to truth and right, in soaring intellect and spiritual fervour, in humility of spirit, he has never been excelled, if he has been equalled. He was the

great teacher of the Middle Ages. To all churches and schools of theology to-day his writings are mines of suggestion.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Seeberg says: "Where he trod, everything flourished and blossomed; he could wed the profound with the external (*e.g.* merit and almsgiving); stones became bread in his hand. This wonderful gift of assimilating and transforming explains, in part at least, his influence on the Church. But it also explains why the loosely connected elements in his theory, held together only by the force of his religious genius, failed to exercise a thorough-going reforming influence on the whole of church doctrine. He had the creative power of the reformer, but lacked the gift of destroying. In this way we understand the crowd of contradictions and opposing tendencies in his doctrine. And yet the thoughts of this man have furnished themes for the piety and theology of above a thousand years." Dr. Harnack: "'Not what one knows and says, decides, but what one loves,'—he loved God, he loved his church, and he was a man of truth. This character shines from all his writings, whether it is the Neo-Platonist, the former Manichæan, the Pauline Christian, the Catholic Bishop, or the Biblicist who speaks in

<sup>1</sup> The translation in recent years of his chief works in 16 vols. (Clark, Edinburgh) proves this,

him ; and it lends to all his expositions a unity which cannot be shown in the doctrines, but can plainly be felt. Therefore the different schools that have issued from him, or learnt from him, have always felt the *whole* man, and gained strength from him. He would not have been the teacher of the future had he not stood before it as a personality that gave force and weight to every word, whether it led in this direction or in that. As a preacher of faith, of love, and the reign of grace he rules Catholic piety to-day ; by his central thought : ‘ It is a good thing to me to cleave to God,’ by his distinction of law and gospel, letter and spirit, and by his doctrine that God creates faith and a good will in us, he called forth the Reformation ; by his doctrine of the authority and sacraments of the Church he carried farther the edifice of Roman Catholicism, nay first created the hierarchical, sacramental system ; by his Biblicism he awakened the so-called pre-Reformation schools, and paved the way for criticism of all extra-Biblical church traditions ; by the force of his speculation, the keenness of his intellect, the fineness of his observation and experience he stimulated, nay, in part produced, scholasticism in all its branches, including the nominalist, and hence also modern philosophy and psychology ; by his Neo-Platonism and

predestinarian enthusiasm he called forth the mysticism as well as the anti-clerical opposition of the Middle Ages; by his peculiar ideal of Church and blessedness he confirmed the vulgar-Catholic or monkish spirit, while making it at home in the Church, and so awakening it and enabling it to overcome and master the world that opposes the Church; finally, by his unique capacity of setting forth his thoughts, of uttering his wealth of ideas, and giving every word a stamp of his own, by his gift of individualising and self-observation, he contributed to the uprising of the renaissance and the modern spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, 1 Aufl. iii. 91. See also Dr. Bigg's comparison of Origen and Augustine in his *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 284.

## VII

### CONCLUSION

WE have seen that the definition of the doctrines of the Trinity and Christ's Person was chiefly the work of the eastern Church. The west indeed had a share in it, coming in at the end to complete and round off the development. Still, the chief glory belongs to the east. The doctrines of human nature, sin, and redemption, on the other hand, were elaborated in the west. These have never been taken over by the eastern Church as eastern definitions were received in the west. In all respects the eastern Church stands where the Council of Chalcedon left it.

We have also seen in this period the germs of the later Papal polity as well as of Papal doctrine and usage. A chief factor in the growth of Papal power was the incomparable glory of ancient Rome. As the city had for ages been the centre of the political world, it naturally became the centre of the ecclesiastical

world. When a point of unity was needed, no other city had a chance of competing with it, although Rome was not one of the earliest Christian centres, nor during the first centuries did it produce any great leader or thinker. The great Fathers who have moulded Christian thought are found in Carthage, Alexandria, Constantinople, Antioch, Jerusalem. It was not till the Middle Ages that the Roman see was adorned by eminent genius. The earliest Fathers acknowledged a Roman primacy, but not supremacy. One of the means used by Roman bishops to increase their power was to encourage appeals on questions of doctrine and discipline. Bishops in the east and elsewhere in case of controversy were of course only too glad to get the support of the bishop of Rome, and the bishop of Rome welcomed the appeals. "Bishops placed the highest value on the Pope's authority when it favoured or might favour their theological convictions. Were this not the case, they knew how to oppose the proceeding in Gal. 2 to the words in Matt. 16<sup>18</sup>" (Seeberg). Cyprian would not defer to Stephen. Although during this early period Roman supremacy had not been reached, it was almost within sight. Let anyone compare the idea of tradition in Tertullian and Irenæus (p. 54) with the idea



in Vincent (p. 183). In the one it is a witness, in the other a judge on a level with Scripture, as in later days. Directly tradition became a law of faith, an administrator of the law would be necessary; and where would he be sought? Jerome writes: "You say the Church is founded on Peter, although in another place it is founded on all the apostles, and all receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . . Yet among twelve one is chosen that, a head being appointed, occasion of schism may be removed." Evidently the supremacy of the Roman see grew out of reasons of convenience and expediency, and was afterwards placed on the ground of direct divine authority. Seeberg (p. 330) quotes an edict of the emperor Valentinian III. (445 A.D.), which says: "Then the peace of the churches will be everywhere preserved, if the whole (*universitas*) acknowledges its ruler," and, "Let that be a law to all, which the authority of the apostolic see has approved or shall approve." If the question of a centre of unity had been kept on the ground of utility, much might be said for it. The terrible error and mischief begin when it is placed among the articles of the Christian faith.

One of the most perplexing problems suggested in the previous pages is the slight attention given in early days to the atoning

work of Christ in comparison with the enormous amount given to the doctrine of his Person. From the Apostolic Fathers down through the Alexandrines, Antiochians, North Africans, Romans, Greeks, the contrast at every step cannot fail to strike the reader. The references to the atonement quoted in the previous pages fairly represent the state of things in number and character, and they leave a sense of keen disappointment. The Scripture terms are repeatedly used, but there is no attempt at discussion or explanation. Different views are placed beside each other without any effort to harmonize them. This is perhaps strangest in a practical yet philosophical writer like Augustine. If difficulties are felt, they are not discussed. There is no such thing as a theory of atonement to be gathered from the early writers, while theories abound in modern days. Anyone who will compare the character of the section given to "Soteriology" in writers on the history of doctrine like Dr. Shedd<sup>1</sup> with previous sections, will find ample evidence of the contrast.

It is doubtful whether a complete explanation is possible, but some suggestions may be made.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. ii. p. 203. Dr. Shedd says mildly: "The doctrine of Atonement was not the strongest side of the patristic system generally" (ii. p. 230).

We have sufficient evidence that the position a subject takes in theological treatment is not always a measure of the place it takes in the faith of the Church. At the Reformation the position is reversed. Atonement and redemption are in the forefront, the question of Christ's Person is far from prominent. At the Reformation there was no necessity to discuss the latter subject. The Reformers practically agreed with the old Church on it, and tacitly took over the old creeds. It is certainly treated of in formal systems of theology, but it does not enter into popular teaching and discussion. In a similar way it is not improbable that the work of redemption entered more largely into popular teaching in the early Church. Indeed, we have evidence that this was the case. The unscriptural doctrine, as we hold it to be, of the sacrificial character of the eucharist, coming down from early, though not the earliest, days, shows that the doctrine of sacrifice was kept before the eyes of the Church. The sacrifice for sin offered on the Cross was believed to be repeated or perpetuated in the most solemn act of Christian worship. The fact of atonement for sin at least was never out of sight. To-day there is no material difference between Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants as to the

propitiatory purpose of the Saviour's death. The general teaching on the subject, apart from theological interpretations, in the two systems is substantially the same. As it is controversy that has called forth formal definition on other subjects, it is probably the absence of controversy on this subject that to a certain extent explains the absence of dogmatic definition. But then why the absence of controversy? Perhaps the fact is to be rejoiced over. We may be thankful that for ages the Most Holy Place of the Christian faith—the Atonement—was not disturbed by contending voices. Here different churches and schools of thought have agreed to a perpetual peace. There has ever been, as there is to-day, little disposition to theorise and argue as long as the central truth is held fast. Still this of course is no real explanation. The fact remains that Anselm's doctrine in the eleventh century was the first attempt to give a reasoned account of the subject. How that doctrine was adopted by the Reformers, how it has been criticised, it does not fall to us here to consider. Form and detail are of little importance. In substance at least it is faithful to the previous faith of the Church, and it has powerfully influenced subsequent thought. But the theory has not been followed up with anything of equal originality and force.

Still more perplexing is the absence of the Pauline doctrine of justification, as interpreted at the Reformation. Indeed, the entire Pauline scheme of doctrine—sin, atonement, justification, faith—is wanting. In one or two passages it seems to be hinted, but no more. Justification is merged in sanctification. Faith is an intellectual act, instead of spiritual trust. The divergence from Pauline teaching is apparent in the Apostolic Fathers, and it continues to increase throughout the whole period. The distinction between sins before and after baptism appears early, and becomes a fixed idea. Christ's atonement avails no doubt for both classes of sin; but in regard to the latter it needs supplementing by works of penance; and as all fall into such sins, all must make satisfaction. The immense importance ascribed in early days to the two sacraments tended in the same direction. They were the essential, exclusive, and certain means of salvation. Christians were made dependent on them and on the Church, which could alone dispense them. Thus the Church moved ever more and more away from the Pauline world of thought. It is quite true that Christ's death was always regarded as the ultimate source of grace, and this undoubtedly modified the evil tendency at work. But that

source was far away and hidden from sight by human inventions and growths of all kinds. The way of direct access to God for the individual was closed. Probably then, as now in the Roman Church, thousands were better than their creed, and found their way to the Saviour and the Cross. But no way of direct access was preached in pulpits or taught in theology. It was left for Luther and the Reformation to discover the way of peace as Paul taught it, and to vindicate for every one the privilege of approach to God through Jesus Christ. Perhaps it may be taken as a presumption against the Protestant doctrine that it is new. The book is there, Paul pleads his own cause, the matter is not difficult. It may seem strange that Augustine, who depended so much on Paul for his doctrines of sin and grace, should have missed his way here. Much is due to the fact that Augustine's spirit was conservative. He lacked, we have been told, the power of destroying (p. 199). The system of church authority and sacramental grace, which he did so much to consolidate, had acquired immense strength before he appeared. It had been built up by east and west alike. His mistake was in not going beyond it to apostolic foundations.

The story of Christian doctrine supplies a

wonderful illustration of the law of development which governs the moral as well as the physical world. Absolute beginnings are few. In thought and belief we are the children of former generations. No sharp line of separation can be drawn. The beliefs of one age run on into the next. There are false and perverted as well as true developments. Our comfort is the faith that the law of growth is God's law, and that, despite human error and perversity, the final issue under God's rule must be good.



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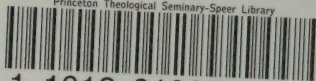
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